THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 9 February, 1927 Number 2

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The World of Labour :: Book Review

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NOTES of the MONTH

The New Capitalist Offensive—Shackling the Movement—Government plus Reformists—Saving the Right Wing—Labour Party Evolution—"Liberalising" the Labour Party—Conservatising the Labour Party—Imperialising the Labour Party—A New Journal—Imperialism's Home Policy—Imperialism and Coalition—Future National Coalition—Against the Working Class—Labour Party Past and Present—Hardie on the Empire—1906 and 1909—Beyond Cobdenism?—Out of the Liberal Frying Pan—Into the Imperialist Fire—New Imperialist Watchwords—"Commonwealth of Nations"—Are the Dominions Self-Governing?—Australian Workers' Views—Canada—"Socialise or Smash"—Imperial Utopianism—Stuttgart Controversy—"Socialist" Colonialism—Explicit Rejection—Kautsky's Arguments—Practical Consequences—Lenin on Imperialism—Why Social Imperialism Fails—Cheap Beef at a High Price—Socialist Phrases and Capitalist Facts—"Saving the Empire"—Through Empire Collapse to Socialism—Imperialism, Industrial :: Peace, Coalition. ::

IN the present period the existing Labour Party and trade union leadership are giving expression to their policy more openly and shamelessly than at any time since 1922, since, that is, the period of reaction following on Black Friday. Once again they calculate that, having driven the workers down into the depths by their treachery, they can come into the open in co-operation with capitalism. Industrial peace dinners and lunches are the order of the day, both between trade union leaders and industrialists and financiers, and between Labour Party leaders and Government Ministers. This ugly conviviality with their supposed "enemies"—fresh from starving the workers, imprisoning thousands, breaking their resistance and preparing fresh attacks—should open the eyes of ever greater numbers of

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workers to the character of the existing leadership, and forms the fitting logical sequel of their betrayal of the General Strike and the miners' struggle. The united leaders of capitalism and the servants of capitalism in the Labour Movement meet to celebrate their common "victory" over the forces of class struggle, and to prepare new treaties of enslavement for the workers. This is the first stage of the impending attack on the Labour Movement, as prophesied as the result of the betrayal of the General Strike and of the miners' struggle.

BUT there is a great difference between the present period and previous periods of reaction and industrial peace propaganda. This difference lies in the fact, first, that there is now in existence a growing and active organised revolutionary opposition movement, centred around the political leadership of the Communist Party, which is ready to fight the reformist policy, and can only gather strength from the more and more clearly revealed treacheries of the reformist leaders; and, second, that the whole character of the present period, the worsening conditions, the increasing attacks on the workers, the capitalist reorganisation by dismissals, lower wages and longer hours, the intensified struggle and growing imperialist antagonism, all make certain the failure of the policy of class peace and provide the ready ground for the advance of the new forces. It is for this reason that the existing leadership is fighting more openly and recklessly than ever before, more shamelessly in co-operation with the capitalists, because they know that if they cannot impose lasting shackles now on the movement in the moment of defeat they will inevitably go under before the new forces.

IN one of the capitalist periodicals that are the normal organs of publicity of the Right Wing, Thomas has declared that he is fighting "with his back to the wall." This is rhetorical exaggeration. With all the forces of the State behind them, with all the resources of capitalism, with all the publicity of the capitalist Press (it may be observed how the whole capitalist Press loyally co-operated with the trade union bureaucracy in keeping secret the General Strike report, and only the *Sunday Worker* broke the

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ring on behalf of the workers), with all the autocratic power of the trade union machine and discipline, the Right Wing are not to be so easily dislodged; indeed, it will be a highly advanced stage when their position is really threatened. But it is true that their moral influence with the working class is already largely shattered; and the Left Wing is rapidly advancing towards the point of organised power to be able to assume the leadership of the working-class struggle, as was already shown in part in the development of the miners' struggle. And for this reason the reformist leaders are seeking, not only to strengthen their hold on the machine, but to tie the machine firmly to capitalism and transform the trade unions in the direction of Americanised company unions. The impending capitalist attack on the trade unions is not only an attack from the Conservative Government: it is an attack from the Conservative Government *in union with the reformist leadership*, and the industrial peace propaganda is the artillery preparation of the attack.

THE fight for industrial peace is indissolubly bound up, for the reformist bureaucracy as for the Government, with the fight against Communism and the Left Wing. When the Government invites Labour leaders of the type of Snowden, Clynes, Williams, Cramp, Pugh, &c., to dine with a Churchill, while at the same time publicly refusing even the presence of Cook as a nominated representative on a technical committee, it is conspicuously drawing a distinction between friends and enemies which should be no less clear to the working class. What is being proclaimed is that one form of trade unionism will be allowed, and another will not; that so long as trade unionism accepts capitalism, and is prepared to act as its instrument of administration, legal facilities will be permitted it; but that so soon as trade unionism begins to threaten capitalism, then the law needs at once to be revised, the scales must be weighted in favour of the approved Right Wing leaders, in order that their leadership and policy may be maintained, and if this is not done, Government approval will be removed from the trade unions. By this fact the rôle of the Right Wing is stamped as that of the Government's servants in the trade unions. The distinction

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between Right and Left is not the distinction between two possible view-points or policies within trade unionism, but between the Government's servants and the workers' servants. Lenin's words on Henderson and his colleagues should never be forgotten: that they are in fact nothing but "zubatovs" (secret police agents acting as trade union leaders), "differing from ours only in their European dress, in the gloss of their civilised, refined, democratically smooth manner of conducting their mean, sordid politics." To fight the Government attack on the trade unions it is not enough to repeat the customary formulas of trade union rights and solidarity and leave their maintenance to the existing leadership; it is necessary to recognise that the Government's objective is, not to "destroy" the trade unions, but to secure the maintenance of Right Wing leadership and policy within them, that the enemy is already within the gates and the negotiations have already begun, and that the only way to fight the Government attack is to strengthen the revolutionary Left.[1]

BUT the same fight is developing in corresponding forms in the Labour Party; and here the offensive needs especially careful watching. The general character of the fight of the Right Wing against Communism, *i.e.*, against independent working-class politics and expression, in the Labour Party has been conspicuous during the past five years, with its steady intensification to the point of widespread disaffiliation of local Labour Parties during the past twelve months, formation of rival local parties, and consequent disruption of the unity of the

[1] Since the above was written *The Times* articles on "Trade Union Reform" completely bear out the view-point taken.

> No accommodation is possible with the Left Wing, but accommodation is possible with the Right Wing. Reform within the unions is far better than compulsion by the law. . . . This does not mean that legislation is unnecessary. Some change in the law would be required to give effect to agreed reforms. . . . The Government has to protect the public from the national danger of revolutionary strikes engineered by a minority. . . . All parties alike, the trade unions themselves and all who care for the national welfare, have a common interest in solving this problem.

The aim of trade union "reform," by agreement with the Right Wing leaders to prevent by legislative means Left Wing control, is here baldly stated.

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working-class movement at a constantly enlarging rate: a process which, unless checked, will automatically lead to the disruption of the Labour Party (exclusion of national trade unions sympathetic to Communism, splitting of the trade unions, abandonment of the trade union basis). But this process is only the spearhead and visible point of conflict of a wider process of the social and political transformation of the Labour Party: and it is this transformation which is important to note.

THIS process has sometimes been spoken of as the "Liberalising" of the Labour Party. The term is in principle accurate, in so far as it fixes on the root of the issue as the attempt to divorce the Labour Party from the working-class struggle, which it was originally formed to express, and its consequent reversion to the old deceitful "classless" Liberal politics and supposed representation of the interests of the "community" of all classes (which "community" can in practice only mean the interests of the dominant or capitalist class, as the 1924 Government showed). But this term in practice only faintly and inadequately suggests the extent and character of the transformation, adulteration, moulding, and absorption which has taken place and is taking place in relation to the upper strata of the Labour Party and its official policy: and it is just the specific character of the change of which it is above all important to be aware.

IT would be more vivid and illustrative of the actual process to speak of the "Conservatising" of the Labour Party. For, on the one hand, the old pre-war Labour Party was, in the traditional sense of the term, a great deal more "Liberal," and more completely tied in adoring worship to the doctrines and shibboleths of the Liberal prophets, than the present party, which has shown considerable ability to rise superior to old-fashioned Liberal notions of democracy, civil liberty, free trade and national freedom. And, on the other hand, in actual day-to-day politics at present the official "Labour" Opposition differs very little in practice from the Conservative Government in the most essential questions (*e.g.*, Locarno, gold standard, League of Nations, Empire development, industrial peace, anti-Com-

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munism), so much so that it has been frequently remarked nowadays that the two official front benches find very little to oppose each other about, and the more radical criticism of the Government, such as it is, has commonly come from Lloyd George.

HOWEVER, the term "Conservatising" lacks sufficient positive meaning, and does not indicate the real ground of the process. For the essential character of the process is not so much the "Liberalising" or the "Conservatising" of the Labour Party as its adaptation to modern capitalism, and in particular—and this is the key to the whole process—to modern large-scale trustified State-controlled imperialist capitalism. Using the term "imperialism" in its scientific sense to denote, not merely the colonial policy of capitalism, but the whole character of modern advanced capitalism, the process of transformation of the Labour Party can be most correctly spoken of as the *imperialising* of the Labour Party. *The parallel to the "Americanising" of the trade unions is the "imperialising" of the Labour Party.* Here in these two are the essential current grounds of conflict.

A VALUABLE sidelight on the current trend of policy of the Labour Party Right Wing—and in itself a symptom of the extreme stage that has been reached—is afforded by a new journal that has appeared since the beginning of the current year. This journal appears under the non-committal title of the *London Weekly*, and describes itself as "non-party." It is edited by a prominent member of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and is contributed to by Labour leaders, such as Snowden, Thomas, Pugh, Lansbury, Graham, &c. It is equally contributed to (under the same Labour editorship, and alongside the same Labour leaders) by the Conservative Colonial Secretary, by Conservative and Liberal politicians, and by leading business men. This co-operation of Conservative, Liberal, and Labour spokesmen in a single political organ is already a notable fact. What is the platform on which this coalition of Conservative, Liberal, and Labour spokesmen find it possible to give expression to their unity? The editorial policy of the journal is declared to be "to help the economic and political organisation of the Empire with a view to making its resources more generally available for all, and

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in the expectation that this will lead to a higher standard of life and a greater prosperity for all." Thus the programme is a programme of Empire development and "prosperity." The common basis on which the Conservative, Liberal, and Labour leaders find it possible openly to declare their unity is the basis of imperialism.

BUT what goes with imperialism? Imperialism is not a special and separate question, like, let us say, prohibition, on which it would be conceivably possible for capitalist and Labour representatives to combine in advocating some particular measure without prejudice to their respective class points of view. Imperialism involves the whole field of modern capitalism. Who says "imperialism" must say "capitalism" (that is, in daily practice, whatever illusory shibboleths for the imaginary future he may add to salve his conscience). What is the home policy of the new journal? Here the programme statement is silent, but the editorial notes throw light. In the first number industrial peace is advocated on the basis of "high wages" and a "real partnership in industry." In the second number Cook is rebuked for his "frothy stuff," "no practical programme," "a vague insurrectionism which would certainly lead to a worse economic disaster in 1927 than that of the coal miners in 1926"; and the Labour Council for Chinese Freedom is rebuked as an "unofficial and self-appointed body" which "complicates the situation." In the third number the Communists receive their turn for their "gloomy theories of catastrophic development" ("the painful facts are that the development of the modern world and the modern application of science have proceeded too rapidly for comprehension by some minds of Communist tendency. The organisation of the British Empire at present is altogether more hopeful than anything the 'Extreme Left' had dreamed possible"); the General Council discussion is referred to with the remark that "what will certainly emerge very clearly is the loss to trade union funds, membership and morale caused by the strike"; and a "conference of trade unionists, industrialists, and members of the Government" is advocated to "put in true perspective the position of organised industry in the national life both from the point of view of the

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employer and the employed, organised business and organised labour." These extracts are sufficient to indicate the political colour of this " non-party " organ. The home policy of imperialism is industrial peace.

BUT the political correspondent of the new journal carries the matter further. He declares that nowadays the differences between the official Conservative, Liberal, and Labour Parties are much less than the differences between individual members of each. Conservative and Labour policy are practically the same in all essential questions. " There is no quarrel upon foreign policy at all, the proof being that the House of Commons has had no debate whatever of any importance upon this vital subject." " The second common factor in all parties is their policy towards the Empire." During the Labour Government foreign politicians were amazed to observe that " their foreign policy is the same," " their financial policy is the same "; now with their Conservative successors they find that " their social policy is the same " (this is actually written, without challenge or correction, of the Conservative " social " policy, of which the workers have had full taste during the past year). " The Conservative Party has a spiritual complexion not very different from that of the evolutionary Socialists " (this is very true, though the workers will draw a different lesson from it to that which the writer intends). But to what does all this lead ? The political correspondent draws no lesson save that " the character of British politics has not radically changed " (*i.e.*, capitalist politics are still unchallenged) and " Parliament is not in danger " (*i.e.*, the capitalist State is still safe). But the practical lesson which is suggested is obvious. If there is no vital difference between the parties, why should they not unite, as they are already virtually united, or at any rate the " sane " men in all three unite, when the time comes, to maintain the Empire and the " unchanging character of British politics " and the sanctity of " Parliament " ? Thus the political complement of imperialism and industrial peace is here correctly foreshadowed—namely, coalition. Imperialism, industrial peace, coalition—these are the three signs of the existing Labour Party leadership. The appearance of the non-party *London*

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Weekly is a foreshadowing of the future national imperial coalition of Conservative, Liberal, and Labour leaders against the working class (of which an embryo form was already revealed during the General Strike).

CERTAINLY such a coalition is no immediate question, short of a very rapid sharpening of the class struggle. In the first place, the present virtual coalition, in which the front benches act together, while maintaining a slight show of difference (MacDonald's ugly rôle on China as mediator for the Foreign Office to the Labour Movement illustrates this), is more effective for the present. In the second place, the immediate next step, short of a Labour majority—which would carry forward development most rapidly—is still likely to be some form of Liberal-Labour understanding. But the essential outcome of the present parliamentary approximation, which is a conspicuous feature of the present period, is sooner or later, when the national emergency comes, the national coalition, when Thomas and Churchill will stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of capitalism and the Empire—called "Parliament" and "democracy"—against the advancing working class, as well as against the revolt of the subject peoples and the opposing forces of the imperialist enemies. The working-class movement will do well never to leave out of mind this future confrontation of forces; because it means that the essential task at present in the building up of the Labour Party is not the building up of the influence of Thomas, MacDonald, &c. (as shown in the common argument against the public criticism of Thomas, MacDonald, &c., that "it may injure the Labour Party"—not at all: it will injure the Labour Party a great deal more if they are not criticised), but the building up of a strong, conscious, awakened Socialist working-class movement throughout the localities of the whole country that will be able to go forward unbroken when the reformist leaders fail and finally join their friends.

FOR there is this fact about the commonly reported closer approximation of political parties, which is usually left out of account: the political reporters who draw these comments nearly always have their view confined to the limited parliamentary

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arena. But at the very same time as this undoubted closer unity of parliamentary parties is taking place the divisions within the country are growing greater than ever before. The social and economic gulf of rich and poor is widening year by year, as the statistics of profits and wages, of fortunes and pauperism, abundantly show. Not only that, but the political, conscious organised antagonism of classes is at a higher point than ever before, as shown in the General Strike, and the growth of the Labour Party in the country (entirely unjustified by the spineless representation in the House) is only a symptom of this. Social division is, in fact, more intense than at any time since Chartism; in its deep-seated and widespread character it is greater than at any time since the last civil wars. Thus the closer unity of parliamentary parties is not an evidence of the diminution of conflict; on the contrary, it is a symptom of intensification; it is the drawing together of the parliamentary puppet-representatives of the capitalist State in face of the new and larger conflict. And an evidence of this process is the unchallenged appearance—with Labour co-operation and nominal leadership and Conservative financial backing—of this imperialist journal of open and shameless social and political class-co-operation.

IN the past, when the Labour Party, however limited and timid in social philosophy, was still at any rate more closely tied to the working-class movement and responsive to the elementary demands of class instinct, the appearance of a journal of this character, of open co-operation in imperialism between prominent Labour spokesmen and Conservative Government Ministers, would have aroused considerable commotion and emphatic repudiation from the Labour Party Executive. In 1909 Blatchford raised the disgust and indignation of the movement by coming out with a series of imperialist Big Navy articles in the *Daily Mail*. Although Blatchford held no official position in the movement, and was only editor of an unofficial pseudo-Socialist journal, the Labour Party Executive came out with an official repudiation:—

> We regret that Mr. Blatchford, whose previous work has identified him more or less with ourselves in the eyes of the public, has lent his name to this most absurd and wicked outburst against Germany. We emphatically disassociate ourselves from all such actions.

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To-day the reformist Labour leaders regularly write articles in the *Daily Mail* and the rest of the capitalist Press, attacking, not merely the imperialist enemies of their own imperialist masters, but the workers' own leaders and fighters; and no question is raised. A parliamentary Labour leader (secretary of the so-called Labour Commonwealth Group, representing the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party) edits an imperialist journal in direct co-operation with Conservative politicians and the Conservative Government—and the Labour Party Executive members all rush in to contribute. This is a measure of the path that has been travelled.

BUT this is only an instance of a general process. In the early days the Labour Party was on the whole anti-imperialist in instinct, even though without any very grounded outlook or active policy. This anti-imperialist tendency might represent mainly the simple conception of democracy and self-determination as against imperialist domination and conquest. But it saw also very clearly the Empire as the instrument of capitalist exploitation and the enemy of Socialism. Thus Hardie could declare in the far-off days of the South African War, when only the Fabian corruptors were open imperialists:—

> In the transition stage from commercialism to Socialism there must be such suffering. . . . A great extended Empire lengthens the period required for the change, and thus prolongs the misery, and it follows that the loss of the Empire would hasten the advent of Socialism. The greater the Empire, the greater the military expenditure, and the harder the lot of the workers. Modern imperialism is in fact to Socialists simply capitalism in its most predatory and militant phase.—Quoted in the *Life of Kier Hardie*, by W. Stewart, p. 147.)

As a statement on imperialism and its relation to Socialism this is not complete; it could be easily subjected to criticism. Nevertheless it is a thousand times nearer to the essence of the question than the trivial lies and hypocrisies about the "Commonwealth of Nations" and "Empire development" which pass muster for "Socialist" teaching on the Empire among Labour Members of Parliament nowadays. In the same way Hardie, in the House of Commons, could hurl across the benches

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the charge that the organ of imperialism, the Colonial Office, was "synonymous with treachery and duplicity" (*Hansard*, 1905, Vol. 142, p. 491). To-day the Conservative Colonial Minister is the honoured collaborator of our present Labour statesmen.

ANOTHER type of example will also help to illustrate the change that has taken place. In 1906 the Liberal Government introduced "self-government" for the Transvaal and the Orange River on a basis of white enfranchisement—the whites representing the minority of the population. The Labour Party demanded the enfranchisement of the black man on the same basis as the white man. In 1909 the Liberal Government introduced the South Africa Federation Bill, in which the colour bar was established for the election of the Union Parliament. The Labour Party moved an amendment for striking out the colour bar, although the Government declared any amendment would "wreck the Bill." The amendment was defeated, and the Labour Party Executive formally reported its regret at the "retrograde" character of the provision. This was seventeen years ago, when the Labour Party still believed that Africans had equal human rights with Europeans, and that one race was not created to rule another. To-day South Africa is still under the same white minority rule (the disfranchised Africans are 80 per cent. of the population); but to-day in Labour Party propaganda South Africa is proclaimed to be a "free" dominion, and the agitation against black disfranchisement is forgotten. On the contrary, the incapacity of Africans for equal rights with Europeans is taken for granted, and in the Liverpool Conference 1925 resolutions on Empire policy all the customary sugared imperialist hypocrisies about the white man's trusteeship and guardianship over the African races "pending self-government" are complacently repeated.

WHAT is the meaning of this change? In the eyes of those concerned the change represents a great "advance." It represents a throwing off of the old servitude to Liberal shibboleths of anti-imperialism, free trade,

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Cobdenism, &c., and an advance to a larger sphere of economic and political relations, providing an admirable basis for Socialism. These disciples of imperialism seriously believe that modern working-class anti-imperialism is a revival of this "Cobdenism" that they have thrown off. Thus a typical representative of the school writes:—

> This idea that the Empire is a danger and a menace is not a Socialist idea at all, but a survival from the Whig theories of three-quarters of a century ago. . . . Surely we needn't simply meander around repeating the stale and flyblown phylacteries of a discredited anti-Socialist Whiggery, imagining that in so doing we are "advanced."

What is believed to be the alternative to this "Whiggery"?

> The Empire is a big fact—now. It is a League of Nations in being. Under a Socialist inspiration, with Home Rule all round and a federated parliament for the Empire dealing with imperial affairs of common interest to all the federated nations, it might be made the greatest lever for human emancipation known.

This quotation is a typical statement of the current school, and affords an instructive contrast to the supposed "Liberal" or "Whig" outlook of Keir Hardie.

NEVERTHELESS there is an element of half-truth in the alleged advance from "Liberalism" which is very important to disentangle, because it leads us straight to the actual character of the change that has taken place, and the real alternative to imperialist policy. It is perfectly true that the pre-war Parliamentary Labour Party was still closely tied to the already obsolete doctrines of Liberal capitalism, and nowhere more than in foreign affairs, to the philosophy, that is, of trading, manufacturing capitalism at the time of British industrial domination of the world market, when every country could be assaulted by the stream of cheap goods in the name of peace and free trade, without the burden and unnecessary expenditure of military and colonial policies, which were regarded with suspicion as a relic of mercantilism. This kind of Liberal "pacifism," "internationalism" and "anti-imperialism" was in reality nothing but a disguised species of imperialism, resting in fact on a position of world exploitation. The representatives of the Labour aristocracy, raised up above the

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level of the international proletariat on the basis of this world exploitation, united with their masters and echoed their philosophy and outlook, including the spurious "internationalist" free trade tradition. Only a few Labour representatives, such as Hardie, fought their way even partially to a conscious Socialist working-class outlook. In so far as the "pacifism," "internationalism" and "anti-imperialism" of the pre-war Parliamentary Labour Party was of this spurious Liberal type, it was rotten through and through, as the stroke of war completely showed, when a rapid change of tack, in accordance with the new dictates of capitalism, was immediately carried out by the majority.

BUT what have the representatives of the new school done who so proudly announce their emancipation from the doctrines of Liberal capitalism? It is perfectly true that they are emancipated (or rather, the simple force of events and the current trend of bourgeois thought have emancipated them) from some of the more obviously obsolete portions of the philosophy of Liberal capitalism. But they have freed themselves from the philosophy of Liberal capitalism only to enslave themselves to the philosophy of modern imperialist capitalism. The victory that they celebrate so triumphantly, making mock of the Leninists as out-of-date "Cobdenites," is not the victory of Socialism over Liberalism, but the victory of imperialism over Liberalism. Monopolist or imperialist capitalism has succeeded to Liberal capitalism—and the servants of capitalism have followed suit. The motto is no longer "free trade," "non-intervention," "splendid isolation," &c. The motto is "Empire organisation," "Empire development," "the large-scale unit," &c. And the reformist "Labour" representatives, the servants of capitalism, have changed their tune accordingly. They have adapted their rôle to the new forms of capitalism, and so are able to come forward again in unity with their capitalist friends, serving with them on Empire marketing committees, &c., and joining with them in united Empire propaganda (as formerly in united free trade propaganda). But their *relative* position is still exactly the same as before. They have not advanced a single

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inch yet to Socialism, *i.e.*, to the fighting of capitalism (which in the present period must necessarily mean the fighting of imperialism, since modern capitalism is imperialism).

IN order to cover their new servitude, they bring out a host of new watchwords, which are even more manifestly hypocritical than the old Liberal watchwords, and are in fact nothing more than a very threadbare adaptation of the old Liberal watchwords. They speak of the Empire as a haven of "liberty," as a "commonwealth" of nations, as a harbinger of "peace," as a nucleus of "internationalism," and as a potential instrument of "Socialism." Of these dingy signboards for a very commonplace capitalist enterprise the last is the only one that has an appearance of originality (the supposed connection of the Empire with the possibility of Socialism), and that it is therefore important to discuss with some care. The rest can be very rapidly dismissed. To speak of the Empire as a "commonwealth" obviously changes nothing, and is only the old Fabian trick of conferring new titles on capitalist institutions, like "ceremonial head" for the monarchy, as a suitable "intellectual Socialist" alternative for the more laborious proletarian process of class struggle to change the realities. To speak of "liberty" because one-twentieth of the population outside Britain enjoy the same "free" institutions as Britain is obviously a very bad joke, compared with which the old Liberal propaganda of "freedom" and "equality" in England was an almost plausible illusion. And to speak of a partial capitalist combination in the midst of warring imperialist antagonisms as a step to world peace and internationalism is like describing the rival imperialist alliances during the war as instruments of peace and internationalism (which, incidentally, the imperialist "Socialists" on both sides did during the war).

"THE Communists and their supporters erred," declares Dr. Haden Guest in his book *The Labour Party and the Empire*, "by leaving out of account the self-governing Empire and concentrating on India and the tropical dependencies." (It is noticeable that in this book the author frankly admits that the Communist conception represents "the older international Socialist conception" as against "the new Empire conception" which he

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advocates.) Let us consider this "error." In the first place, it would appear, even assuming the correctness and relevance of the supposed distinction between the "self-governing" and other portions of the Empire, that the "error" would be on the other foot. The disfranchised subject portion of the population of the Empire outside Britain consists of 380 millions (India, 320 millions; Crown colonies and dependencies, 55 millions; South African coloured population, 5½ millions). The enfranchised "self-governing" portion numbers 20 millions. To overlook 5 per cent. of a population for the sake of 95 per cent., or in fact not even to overlook but simply to refuse to treat the 5 per cent. as of paramount importance outweighing the 95 per cent., might seem a pardonable "error" in an international Socialist. But to overlook the 95 per cent. for the sake of the 5 per cent., to throw into the background the autocratic domination of 95 per cent., and on the strength of a 5 per cent. enfranchisement to speak of the principles of "liberty" of the Empire and a "commonwealth" of nations—that would seem to be an unpardonable "error" in any international Socialist. The one is a failure to deal with a special sectional question in a general statement (in point of fact, the special questions of the dominions have been very fully dealt with in Communist propaganda); the other is a failure to deal with the dominant overwhelming character of a whole institution, and in consequence to give a completely false colour and conception of the whole question. To those who are inclined to accept at face value the type of Imperial Conference propaganda expressed in the constitutional report ("The British Empire depends essentially, if not formally, upon positive ideals. Free institutions are its lifeblood. Free co-operation is its instrument") we would recommend the words of a bourgeois democratic statesman who is a favourite authority and hero of the whole of this type of school: "*It is self-government,*" declared Abraham Lincoln, "*when the white man governs himself. But when he governs himself and also governs others, it is no longer self-government; it is despotism.*"

BUT the question of "self-government" goes a great deal farther than this. Are the dominions "self-governing"? If even to a bourgeois democrat like Abraham Lincoln the

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application of the conception of "self-government" to communities like Britain and the white dominions governing subject populations was nothing but cant and humbug and concealment of the true facts (thus putting to shame even by his bourgeois democratic directness many of our modern "Socialists"), what must be said when we come to consider the question from a Socialist point of view? What is meant by the supposed "self-government" of the dominions? It is only necessary to look at the facts to see that what is meant is simply the lying Liberal-capitalist sense of "self-government," which it has been the work of Socialism to expose for the past three-quarters of a century. Our social imperialists, who claim to have left Liberalism behind them, remain remarkably faithful to some of the old Liberal fig-leaves. Baldwin at the Imperial Conference spoke of £850 millions invested by London in the dominions. The South African Economic and Wage Commission (1925) declares that "every year £16 millions leaves South Africa to pay interest and dividends to overseas companies." Is this the reality of power, or is it not? Are the workers who pay this tribute "free" yet in any Socialist sense? All the Parliamentary Labour Governments in all the states of Australia (with the vision of which the British social imperialists endeavour to delude the British workers) have not been able to affect and cannot affect the reality of capitalist power and tribute, whether based in the country or in London, which grows heavier in total weight every year. The control of the dominions from London has to take more subtle forms; there is a local bourgeoisie with growing independent tendencies to be taken into account; but the reality of imperialist domination exists also for the workers in the dominions, as for the workers in Britain, as for the workers in India and the colonies, for *all* the workers in the Empire, despite all the cunning variations of grade and degree. These variations, these small concessions to limited upper strata of a delusory "self-government," instead of being the justification of imperialist rule, as the Labour imperialists (representing the narrow sectional view of the interests of these upper strata) argue, are on the contrary the enemy of the workers, who should unite without regard to these distinctions, upon the basis of their common interests, white, black and brown, skilled and unskilled, highly paid and low paid, "free" and unfree,

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against their imperialist masters, instead of letting one small section be drawn into support of imperialist rule by petty and delusory concessions.

WHAT is the view of the dominions workers themselves? Do they so readily accept the facile illusions of "self-government," on the sole basis of which it is endeavoured to build up a philosophy of the Empire as a "commonwealth of nations"? Dr. Guest asserts that Australian "citizens," enjoying the advantages of their "self-government" and "Socialistic" legislation, would find ridiculous Communist appeals to the unity of interests of "workers and peasants" throughout the Empire against the imperialist exploiters. Let us turn to the Australian Labour Press. This is what the best known Australian Labour paper, the *Australian Worker*, has to say on the question of "self-government" and the decisions of the Imperial Conference, under the heading "Imperialism's Big Bluff":—

> To assert that from now onwards every dominion is a self-governing member of the Empire and master of its destiny is simply political humbug. Of what value is political independence when the people are still throttled economically and financially by the Shylocks of Great Britain? So long as British money power has a stranglehold over the dominions the latter can never be masters of their destinies. —(*Australian Worker*, December 1, 1926.)

The *Australian Worker* is not a Communist paper; it is in fact conducting a very active anti-Communist campaign; but it can see enough of plain working-class interests to know that the relation of Britain and Australia under capitalism is not the relation of equality, federation, commonwealth, kinship and all the rest of it, as our Labour imperialists make out, but the relation of Shylock and his victim, and that the interests of Australian working-class freedom demand complete independence of capitalist Britain.

IN the same way, take Canada. When the British Labour Party called a "Commonwealth Labour Conference," this is what the president of the Canadian Labour Party had to

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declare for the benefit of the British Labour leaders, whom he found to be "imperialists up to the eyebrows":—

> Speaking for the actual workers in the Canadian Labour movement, I say quite openly that we are not at all interested in preserving either British imperialism or the Empire.

The dominions working-class movements have many special difficulties to contend with and many obstacles and local prejudices to overcome before they can enter into full unity with the workers all over the Empire in the struggle against the imperialist exploiters. But if the British Labour imperialists imagine that they can draw the dominions Labour movements in their wake in the service of the Empire and in co-operation with the imperialist exploiters, they have many more shocks to face in front of them, of which the failure of the "Commonwealth Labour Conference" was only the first.

BUT the picture of the "self-government" of the dominions, and the gradual—very gradual—approach of the remaining 95 per cent. of the Empire to the same happy status, is the *sole* basis of the Right Wing Labour propaganda of the Empire as a "commonwealth of nations," a "League of Nations in being," &c., which Labour should help to maintain and build up, instead of as a capitalist prison-house whose workers have the sole interest to break their chains. If this basis goes, what remains? The idealisation of the existing Empire is so obviously threadbare and discredited that there remains only one resource—to make a draft upon the future as the means of justifying the present. So is presented the picture of the Empire becoming, as it were, converted to Socialism, of the tiger becoming a milch-cow. The Empire, it is declared, "under Socialist inspiration . . . *might* be made the greatest lever for human emancipation the world has ever known." It might be "possible to make the Empire a great Socialist instrument." Elysian pictures are presented of Parliamentary Labour Governments in Britain and the dominions happily building up Socialist relations. It is, in the words of Dr. Guest, "the vision of a Labour-controlled Empire." The policy is summed up in the Right Wing Labour slogan, "Socialise the

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Empire," which is contrasted in its "constructive" character with the supposed "destructive" Communist policy of "smashing the Empire." (The description of Communist policy is misleading. The Communist seeks to liberate the peoples in the Empire and to smash the capitalist domination over them, and for this reason supports actively their real, not formal, independence; but this leaves entirely open the possibility of the closest relations between the resulting free workers' communities, or between, say, workers' Britain and nationalist India, which is an entirely practical question, depending on the circumstances of the time, only this being certain in relation to the present question, that fruitful productive economic relations can only be built up, when the element of exploitation and domination has been entirely removed. The Labour imperialist policy, on the other hand, of "not smashing the Empire" ("There is no reason for breaking up the British Empire," says Lansbury; "I am opposed to any policy of wrecking the Empire," says Wheatley, &c.) means in practice maintaining the existing imperialist domination by guns, cruisers, tanks, garrisons, punitive expeditions, air-bombing, nationalist executions, imprisonments, treason trials, Press Acts, &c., and the rest of the apparatus—or "loose tegument," in Johnston's phrase—by which the Empire is held together and which the Labour Government maintained. Thus the real issue is not between "Socialising" and "smashing" the Empire, but between "with the imperialist exploiters" or "with the workers and subject peoples" of the Empire. This whole question, however, needs separate treatment.

THIS propaganda of "Socialising the Empire" brings us to the heart of Labour imperialist propaganda. What is the essential character of this form of "Socialist" defence for co-operating in maintaining the existing capitalist Empire? The essential character of this propaganda is that it utilises a hypothetical Socialist future (which on examination will be found to be completely contradictory and impossible) to defend an existing capitalist present. It abandons the ground of *what is* as indefensible, and enters on the ground of *what might be*, which is

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subject only to fancy, since it is not based on any serious consideration of the real factors, forces and contradictions of the total situation (compare the complete ignoring of the relation of the Empire to other imperialisms, and dismissal of this question with the idealistic picture that it is a "factor of peace"). That is to say, the method is Utopian, not dialectical. But this Utopianism, in common with most Utopianism, is in reality a form of reconciliation with the existing—which is why Utopianism and opportunism, seeming opposites, commonly go together. In the name of this visionary Socialist future, of the "possibility of Socialism," the Labour Party is to maintain the actual imperialist despotism, *i.e.*, defend capitalist interests. The "Socialist possibility" is the usual verbal sop to the Left, the pious recognition of the ultimate goal; the actual capitalist administration, with the armaments, penal codes, trusts, loans, concession-hunting, &c., is in the hands of the Right. There is in fact the usual "division of Labour" between "Left" and "Right" in the Labour imperialist propaganda as in the rest of the policy of class corruption. The working-class Socialist is to be reconciled to the ugly task of maintaining the capitalist Empire by hope of the "Socialist possibilities." But when Thomas says, "We love our Empire," he does not mean, "We love the Socialist-possibilities-implicit-in-the-otherwise-hateful-Empire"; he means, "We love our existing capitalist Empire." Thus the slogan in practice amounts to a trick of propaganda, a kind of double-dealing between capitalism and Socialism, a use of Socialist phraseology to defend capitalist realities. Nevertheless it raises extremely important questions, affecting the whole relations of imperialism and Socialism and the method of transition from one to the other, which it is essential to clear up.

THE question of a "Socialist" taking over of imperialism, of a "Socialist" colonial policy, is not, as is often suggested, a new proposal in international Socialist policy. On the contrary, this precise question received the most exhaustive and most representative discussion in international Socialism before the war (including by most of the present leaders of the Labour and Socialist International), and

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ended in the most decisive and explicit rejection of the whole conception of any "Socialist" colonial policy, of any "Socialist" taking over of the existing colonial systems or any "Socialist" co-operation in existing colonial rule. This discussion came to a head, and the decisive ruling was reached, at the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart in 1907, at which were represented the leaders of the entire international Socialist world from right to left. The Stuttgart decision is very far from an adequate treatment of the question of imperialism, and in the last resort is open to serious criticism. Nevertheless, this decision, and still more the discussion leading up to it, shows definitely that at that time the international Socialist world decisively rejected the conception of a "Socialist" colonial policy.

IT is interesting to note that in a recent discussion of "Socialism and the Empire" in the British Labour Press reference was made to this resolution. In complete innocence the representative of Labour imperialism (T. Johnston) declared that he "quite agreed" with this resolution against the "colonial policy of capitalism," but that this did not in any wise affect his position that a Socialist regime might make use of the Empire for Socialist ends :—

> Mr. Arnot quotes the Stuttgart resolution against the "colonial policy of capitalism." With that resolution I quite agree. I am against capitalism and its colonial and home policies. I deny that the Empire must of necessity be an engine of oppression. Mr. Arnot nowhere seeks to show that it is impossible to make the Empire a great Socialist instrument.—(T. Johnston, *Forward*, August 9, 1924.)

The naïve representative of Labour imperialism has here given himself away. Instead of frankly declaring (like his colleague, Haden Guest) that he is *against* the old international Socialist policy, he rashly imagines that all that is involved is the usual pious verbal repudiation of capitalist colonial policy, to which he can easily subscribe, and so he gaily declares that he "quite agrees" with the decision, in apparent complete unconsciousness that the resolution in question was reached *in opposition to* an alternative resolution which declared that, while all capitalist colonial policy was necessarily bad, Socialism might make use of and take over colonial policy for Socialist civilising ends. This is the decision

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with which our Socialist imperialist declares himself "quite agreeing," and then proceeds to outline as his new alternative the exact policy that was rejected. This trifling and confused treatment of the whole development of international Socialist thought and action is so typical of the "British School of Socialism," which, being in its own opinion free from all "theoretical nonsense," discovers anew all the oldest fallacies fifty times a year, that it may be worth while to recall the essence of the discussion.

THE alternative resolution in question was moved by Van Kol, of Holland, and supported—of course—by Bernstein and David, the two most notorious German Revisionists, and by Ramsay MacDonald. In the condemnation of capitalist colonial policy it agreed in general, though in weaker terms, with the ultimately adopted resolution. But the controversial clause ran as follows :—

> The Congress does not in principle and for all time reject any and every colonial policy, which under a Socialist regime could work as a civilising influence.

The victorious resolution, which was in the end, after a sharp preliminary division, adopted unanimously with one abstention, ran :—

> The Congress declares that capitalist colonial policy in its innermost essence of necessity leads to the enslavement, forced labour or extermination of the native population of the colonised areas. The civilising mission which capitalist society professes serves only as a cover for the thirst for exploitation and for conquest. Only Socialist society will first offer all nations the possibility of full cultural development.

Here are two alternative policies, and the debates brought out their character clearly. One declares that Socialist co-operation in the existing capitalist colonial empires could lead to beneficial civilising results. The other declared that the existing capitalist colonial empires were and could only be instruments of exploitation, against which all Socialists must fight, that the only path to human advance was the path of international Socialism, and that Socialism was sharply opposed to all and any colonial policy. In this debate all the customary arguments about the necessity of a "practical" "constructive" policy, the uselessness of "negative"

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policies, that the abandonment of the colonies would only lead to their relapse to "barbarism," the necessity of "higher" civilisations leading "lower," and the rest of it were brought forward. Nevertheless the Socialist International was still at this time sufficiently sound to reject the whole plea, although only by a small majority (127-108, thus revealing the inroads which opportunism and the still concealed social imperialism had already made by 1907). In this debate the decisive speech was made by Kautsky, who was then still a revolutionary Socialist and Marxist.

KAUTSKY argued in essence as follows. The conception of a "Socialist" colonial policy is based in reality on a confusion. It starts from the correct conception that our policy in relation to the colonies cannot be a merely negative one, that we cannot merely "deny," *i.e.*, ignore, the colonies, that we must perform positive tasks in relation to them. Certainly no one disputes this. But what are these positive tasks? In essence they are the same tasks as at home: to fight against capitalist exploitation, to fight against the bureaucracy, to fight against militarism. But this is social democratic policy, not colonial policy. The confusion arises when, in the name of this necessity of a positive policy in relation to the colonies, is introduced the necessity of a colonial policy, *i.e.*, the maintenance or conquest by force of overseas territory. But colonial policy is the enemy of any possibility of a so-called civilising mission. The conquered nation becomes hostile to the whole culture of the conqueror nation. The possibility of a genuine civilising influence only begins when we completely abandon the relationship of force, *i.e.*, give them their freedom. Bernstein's argument that the domination of lower races by higher is a natural necessity is a simple application of the old argument of despotism and aristocracy from the relation of individuals to the relation of peoples: that certain nations come into the world booted and spurred to ride, and others with saddles on their backs to bear them. The conception that certain peoples are "children," are incapable of self-rule: this is the basic conception of all despotism, the invariable argument of all slave-owners in favour of slavery. So Kautsky argued twenty years ago, and carried the Congress with him.

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IT is to be noted that as in all the discussions of the old pre-war Second International, while the Marxist position is more or less laid down in principle, the practical conclusions are not clearly drawn, and dangerous loopholes are left for opportunist distortions. In particular, the question of the rôle of the Socialist parties in relation not merely to particular abuses in the colonies, but to the active struggle for colonial independence, is indicated, but is not clearly laid down. In the debate Ledebour, the official spokesman for the adopted resolution, was directly questioned whether the logical consequence of the position was not the direct demand for full colonial independence and renunciation of the colonies, and answered "Yes" amid applause ; but the revolutionary task was never explicitly formulated in the resolution. Both the theory and practice of Socialism of the Second International were not equal to the gigantic problems raised by imperialism. It remained for Lenin to work out in all its amplitude the Marxist theory of imperialism, and to deduce in consequence the practical policy of revolutionary Socialism with exact precision.

LENIN showed, first, that imperialism is not simply a special policy, a separable "colonial policy" of capitalism, but that modern capitalism, having outgrown the small-scale free-trade stage and reached the monopoly stage, is and can only be imperialism ; consequently all petty bourgeois Utopian talk of "reforming" imperialism, eliminating the "bad" elements, &c., is a futile ignoring of the real character of the problem; second, that imperialism represents the final stage of capitalism when no further progressive development of capitalism is possible, the stage of parasitism and collapse, of "decaying, dying capitalism," when all the contradictions reach their extreme point, and the only solution is the proletarian revolution ; third, that the victory of the proletarian revolution over imperialism lies in the union of the proletariat in the imperialist countries with the revolting subject peoples struggling for national independence against the imperialist yoke. This, the Leninist theory of imperialism, is the essential basis for the modern working-class movement, and in particular for the British working-class movement.

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WHAT is the essential weakness of the conception of a "Socialist" taking over of the Empire and administering the Empire for Socialistic aims? In the last resort the weakness lies in the conception of the Empire as a unitary economic system independent of its capitalist character, that can be taken over at will ready-made and developed in a Socialist direction, without regard to the inner laws of its development inherent in its capitalist character. But in fact, so long as its fundamental capitalist character remains (*i.e.*, so long as the power and ownership of the capitalist class remain unbroken), these laws necessarily govern its direction, and these laws necessarily mean its intensified contradictions and break-up. The projects of "Socialising" the Empire are projects made in a vacuum, because they ignore the contradictions that are the essence of its capitalistic structure; and therefore, when it comes to realising them, these projects will invariably be defeated, or broken up, or distorted, or thrown into secondary importance by these realities.

SUPPOSING, for example, some ambitious scheme of lowering the price of beef by State bulk purchase within the Empire painfully accomplished in face of all the obstacles, the opposition of the Big Five Meat Combine and their agents, and so forth. The "gain" achieved is the lowering in price of a certain commodity of working-class consumption. It is obvious in how many ways this gain can disappear in the economic flux of wage-earners' conditions (like the "gains" of Snowden's Budget). But in fact the disappearance may arise through causes intimately associated with the same policy that produced the supposed gain. It may disappear through a fall in wages consequent on the policy of class peace, which in practice invariably accompanies Labour imperialism. It may be submerged in the costs of increased armaments or a new war or the suppression of a revolt in India. It may be completely outweighed by a new development of finance capital transferring industry to the colonies (all part of Empire development), throwing masses out of employment. It needs very little imagination to see the net deficit with which a policy of Labour imperialism, even at its most successful, will leave the working class (while as for the effects of how such a policy will

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really be operated, not in a Socialist propagandist's imagination, but by a J. H. Thomas—!). In all these questions it is the midget looking at a *single* point—*e.g.*, the price of beef—as of sole interest to the working class, and not looking at the *total* relations of modern imperialism and their effect on the working class, that is the source of error, as indeed of all opportunism.

THE conception of "scientifically organising the Empire for the common good" (which is the basic conception of the Liverpool resolutions on the Empire) within the capitalist frame-work is a myth which is contrary to every known character of capitalism. The idea that the Empire can somehow be at once capitalist and not capitalist, that it can be capitalist and yet freed from the "abuses" of capitalism, is contemptible self-delusion. Thus the Liverpool Conference calls upon the Conservative Government for

> a survey of the natural resources of the British Commonwealth as a whole, with a view to the scientific direction of their use and to prevent exploitation in the interests of private capitalists.

What a piece of consummate hypocrisy, since the resolution makes no proposal for the expropriation of the capitalists of the Empire, and therefore implies that capitalism is to be run somehow not in the interests of the capitalists ! All this propaganda simply consists in applying the phraseology of Socialist conceptions to capitalist realities, with the result that the practical policy when in office is a very different thing.

THE only practical meaning of the Labour policy of "Socialising the Empire" consists in reality, not in the advance of Socialism in the Empire, but in the giving of the service of the Labour Movement to help the capitalist class to maintain their decaying Empire, to endeavour to smooth over its contradictions, to draw off for a while the working class from fulfilling their rôle of its undertakers, to delude the nationalist movements with illusory promises and hopes, to call for sacrifices from the working class in the name of patriotism and financial stability, to throw a glamour of Socialistic phrases over

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facts of capitalist exploitation—in short, in the words of Professor Zimmern in the *Daily Herald:*—

> As sure as the sun will rise to-morrow the Labour Party will be called upon to save the British Empire from the disintegration with which it is now threatened.—(*Daily Herald*, December 3, 1924.)

He is correct; but the Labour Party will not be able to do it. Where the Chamberlains and Churchills have failed the Thomases and MacDonalds will not succeed. The forces of break-up, which are in reality the forces of growth, are too strong.

FOR the contradictions which on every side are intensifying in relation to the British Empire (class struggle, national awakenings and struggle, independent capitalist orientations and interests, weakening of the British financial centre, advancing rivalry and penetration of American imperialism, war dangers, &c.) are not accidental difficulties for the sapient Socialist "statesman" to endeavour to smooth over and solve with a few sermons on harmony and good-will. On the contrary, the contradictions, so far from being the enemy, are the conditions of the advance to Socialism. It is precisely the contradictions that are the conditions of the collapse of the capitalist Empire and of the real advance to Socialism. It is precisely the intensification of the contradictions that provides the ground for the working class in union with the subject peoples to overthrow the imprisoning, paralysing capitalist rule, and so to set out on the real path of Socialist construction in deeds and not in words. The transition from imperialism to Socialism lies, not in futile attempts to harmonise the contradictions of modern imperialism, but by the proletariat taking advantage of the intensification of the contradictions to win power. This is the essential difference between Leninism and social democracy, or rather, social imperialism.

FOR this reason the question of the Empire is not and cannot be treated as a separable question, to be regarded apart from the other aspects of working-class policy in the economic and political field. It carries with it inevitably the whole of working-class policy, since it carries with it the whole of modern capitalism. The path of Labour imperialism is the path of capitalist recon-

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struction. But the path of capitalist reconstruction is the path of industrial peace and the path of coalition. It is impossible to advocate the harmonious development of the Empire abroad and the intensification of the class struggle at home. It is impossible to fight the capitalist class on the industrial and political field and to appear in unity with them on a supposed neutral imperialist field. Imperialism is the highest expression of co-operation with capitalism. The acceptance of lower wages at home is the counterpart of the advocacy of capitalist Empire development abroad. For the capitalist class the depression of the standards of the workers in Britain in order to raise additional new capital to export for the development of the Empire abroad is the key to the whole scheme of capitalist reorganisation at the expense of the workers. But the policy of capitalist reorganisation is, as the historic example of the coal industry has most clearly shown, the whole policy of reformism in the present period, since the alternative is the facing the intensification of the class struggle to a point that has become revolutionary in fact and raises direct questions of Socialism or capitalism. The policy of the reformist leadership, of the Labour Party Executive and the General Council, as indeed of all the reformist leadership "Right" or "Left" (commonly spoken of as the policy of the Labour Right Wing, because these represent its most conscious and consistent expression and actually govern practice), is in the last resort a policy cut of a single block. Its innermost chara ter is co-operation in capitalist reorganisation. Its outward signs are imperialism, industrial peace, coalition.

R. P. D.

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THE CONFLICT OF IDEAS IN BRITISH TRADE UNIONISM

By A. J. COOK

SINCE the struggle of the miners, which involved the workers in the General Strike and the bringing to bear of the Government weapons of E.P.A., &c., we have been inundated with statements from Labour leaders, especially political leaders, about the "Great Catastrophe," and by the swan song of "Never Again." These views compel us to make a clear statement of the position. It is only when the workers are defeated that this phenomenon of everybody being wrong who advocated and supported the struggle takes place.

If the miners had won they would have been right, even in the eyes of these critics. There is, however, something else which must be remembered, and it is much more than criticism—something which is not personal, but which makes up the vital principles inherent in a real Labour Movement. These principles have been stated and re-stated in this magazine. They are, firstly, that there is no identity of interest between Capitalism and the workers; secondly, that the struggle must continue and that conflict is inevitable under Capitalism; and lastly, that the workers are compelled to fight on both the industrial and political fields, even when not sure of victory. There is no need for argument on these points —neither Mr. Ramsay MacDonald nor Mr. Philip Snowden would have been Members of Parliament if the principles which they now put forward had been adhered to. In a word, the refusal to fight for justice means the acceptance of slavery.

It is true that the miners were defeated, but the cause of this defeat must be fully explained, without fear or favour, even though certain well-known personages in the Labour Movement may be discredited.

Two of the great questions involved in the struggle are: Were the miners right in resisting a lowering of their standards

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of living and the lengthening of their working day? Were the rank and file of the Trade Unions right in deciding to support the miners in their struggle against reductions? The answer to both these questions is in the affirmative—therefore, in view of the actions of the coalowners and the Government, the struggle was inevitable. No Trade Union or political leader would have dared, either before the struggle began or during the struggle, to recommend openly that the miners should accept wage reductions and a lengthening of hours, as everyone knew that the miners' standards were inadequate even before the lock-out. The expressions of sympathy with the miners must have been nothing but hypocrisy, since that sympathy was not translated into positive action. Therefore no one will declare that the miners were wrong in defending their already inadequate standards and struggling against oppression. There is no need to argue this question over again.

In spite of this, the General Council will, before these words appear in print, have declared before the world, almost with joy, that they were right in calling off the General Strike and leaving the miners to be defeated, as they openly declared would be the case. Therefore we can logically say that by their withdrawal of the General Strike they were bringing about what they believed would be the inevitable defeat of the miners.

The miners' leaders and our Committee will have placed our case before the workers. We are not the defendants—we are the accusers. We are not in the dock, because we did our duty not only to the miners, but to the whole working class in resisting the onslaught of Capitalism.

Now let us consider the struggle which is going to be fierce and bitter between the two schools of thought. Snowden has declared that they have taken the gloves off, and MacDonald, Thomas, and Havelock Wilson, in conjunction with Baldwin, Churchill, and the Capitalist Press, are all united in declaring that the General Strike was wrong and must not take place again, that the miners were wrong in resisting the attacks of Capitalism, and that their leaders are incompetent. Apparently the miners' leaders showed their incompetence by refusing to compromise and to betray the decisions of their members. So, in the eyes of

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MacDonald and Snowden and Co., it is incompetent to be loyal to the men. They would have considered us perfectly competent had we acted against the decisions of the men, had we betrayed their trust and compromised by accepting lower wages, longer hours, and district agreements.

Attempts are being made to form an Industrial Parliament, composed of representatives of the workers and of the employers. This is Mr. Henderson's new move for "Peace, Perfect Peace." While conferences of Trade Union leaders and politicians with prominent bankers and industrialists are the order of the day, the Government prepares its plans to break the Trade Union Movement and restrict its functions, and in thus breaking the Trade Union Movement to slay the Labour Party. Oh, yes, they will take off their gloves to fight Cook and the principles that Cook believes in, as that struggle will be popular with the employing classes, and will not endanger their persons or their pockets. It will provide them with wealth by writing for the capitalist papers, and numerous dinners from bankers and captains of industry—while the workers in industry will continue to suffer victimisation and unemployment. All this to secure the stabilisation of Capitalism, which is the logical outcome of the policy of these " champions " of Labour.

The questions that must be asked and answered are, firstly, what is the Trade Union Movement for; and, secondly, what is the Labour Party for ? Are these two great movements to become props to Capitalism, to assist in its stabilisation, or are they to be used for the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth ? Yes, Mr. Snowden, you declare in effect that we, the miners, must be fought with the gloves off—not the capitalists, not the coal-owners, nor even the Government. Of course, occasional speeches will be made in the House of Commons to give plausibility to the appearance that the Government is being threatened. There is no hope of building up either a Trade Union Movement or a Labour Party on these principles. Men that work in the mills, the mines and the factories are suffering all the tortures of persecution and victimisation. In many of our areas there are those who are risking their all in the sole belief that they are building up a movement which will bring about their emancipation.

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Snowden and Co. will not fight the capitalist class but are determined to split the Labour Movement from top to bottom. They are attempting what Spencer is attempting at Nottingham; that is the only logical outcome of their policy. We are indeed at the cross-roads. Whatever unpleasantness it may mean, we cannot allow these men to wreck the working-class movement. They are encouraging not only an attack on the rest of the workers, they are not only justifying the coal-owners' attack on the miners, but they are encouraging an attack on our comrades in Russia. They hate the Russian Workers' Movement more than they hate the Capitalist class. They are out to destroy all those who are prepared to fight the capitalist class.

They are determined to have peace at any price, but they forget the one great fundamental fact that the masses, whom they have fooled, are not receiving the same standard of living as they are, are not attending these dinners, are not economically secure, but are living in poverty, under the shadow of the workhouse. It is these masses who will decide the issue, not Snowden, MacDonald and Co. These gentlemen have been weighed in the balance and found wanting in the greatest test in the history of the British Labour Movement.

I am in more direct contact with the masses of the workers than any leader in this country. I know well their thoughts and aspirations, and they are in no mood to allow hero-worship of past gods to determine either present or future policy. They know their real enemy, and suffering and persecution and unemployment will determine their actions.

Let us join issue with Snowden, MacDonald and Co.; let us fight with the gloves off, by informing the workers of the truth of the situation. Once the masses know the economic facts of the world crisis, which Capitalism has created, then neither the sophistries of Snowden nor MacDonald will hold them back from organising politically and industrially to overthrow Capitalism. It is our duty to harness the revolt and to use every means at our disposal to secure the end we have in view.

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THE CONFERENCE OF EXECUTIVES

By HARRY POLLITT

THE special conference of trade union executives that took place in London on January 20 and 21 had to discuss the most serious issue that our movement has had to face—that of the General Strike, and the future policy of the trade union movement, an issue that cannot be described as something that belongs to the past, because upon the conduct and leadership of the General Strike and the lessons to be learned depends the future of the whole movement.

It must be noted that at the conference, two-thirds of the 1,200 delegates present were there in the capacity of full time trade union officials, who, in the majority of cases, live in a world far removed from the direct working-class struggle, and therefore approach every question from a different angle from those workers who have to eke out an existence on 30s. or £2 per week.

This special conference was to have been called last June. The reason for its postponement was not because the General Council were concerned to preserve the solidarity of the miners in view of Baldwin's attack on the eight hour day. It was because the anger of the workers was so strong on account of the gross betrayal on May 12 that, had the conference been held then, it would not have been as easy to obtain an endorsement of the General Council's policy as it was in January. The real reason for the postponement was, therefore, a political reason. It was to escape a vote of censure and condemnation of the leadership of the General Council.

When the conference did actually take place, it was not an accident that the Chairman of last year's Trades Union Congress, Mr. Pugh, was called upon to make the opening statement on behalf of the General Council—a statement which consisted of reading for one and a half hours a report containing 20,000 words, which no conference in the world could follow unless it had thoroughly read and discussed it. This method of procedure was adopted deliberately in order that the conference should be

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damped down, and any opposition stifled as a result of this treatment of the General Strike.

The discussion that took place brought out quite clearly certain admissions that the workers will not forget to note. First, the admission of Mr. Pugh that the Samuel Memorandum had only the backing of Samuel, and that the General Council did break its pledge in regard to the movement standing firmly together to prevent victimisation of all the sections that had responded to the strike call of the General Council. Secondly, the admission of Mr. Bevin that until April 27, 1926, no preparations of any kind were made by the General Council for the inevitable conflict that was to take place. Third, the position as shown clearly by Mr. Thomas that the formula drafted by the General Council on the night before the General Strike was declared was a wage reducing formula; and fourth, the emphatic declaration of Mr. Smith, the miners' leader, that when the miners were called upon to meet the General Council and were told what the Samuel Memorandum was, they, the miners, were not allowed to make any suggestion, alteration, or amendment to the Memorandum, which represented the basis on which the General Council had decided to call off the General Strike, knowing full well that this Memorandum did mean wage reductions, a policy which was a complete repudiation of the expressed will of the movement as repeatedly shown on many occasions from Red Friday, 1925, to April 30, 1926.

Much was said at the conference about the need of discipline and loyalty to the movement. That is a line everybody would agree with. We cannot have a centralised movement and a fighting leadership unless there is discipline and loyalty in the movement. But discipline and loyalty to a fighting leadership and discipline and loyalty to a leadership that has betrayed the whole working class are two very different things. When it is proved that an important section like the miners are going to be defeated as a result of the treachery of the General Council leaders, and which defeat will have the greatest reaction on the whole movement, then it would have been the miners who would have been guilty of the greatest disloyalty to the whole movement, never mind the General Council, had they not done the only possible thing by repudiating the General Council traitors in refusing to accept the Samuel

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Memorandum. You cannot get discipline and loyalty to a General Council which admits that the first preparation that it made for a General Strike was three days before that General Strike took place —the chief leaders of which have since declared that they " never believed in the General Strike " and " will never take part in one again." Yes. Discipline and loyalty by all means—but to a fighting leadership that will lead the movement to victories and not defeats.

The vote of confidence which the General Council received at this conference in no way represents the feelings of the rank and file of the movement. This is proved by the refusal both of the General Council and the majority of the delegates present at the conference, who opposed the resolution of the miners that the report should be referred back to the rank and file of the unions represented at the conference for their consideration and decision. When a leadership is afraid to refer its policy to the rank and file of the movement, it is an open admission that that policy is a treacherous one and has led to a heavy defeat of the workers. The plain truth of the matter is that neither the General Council dare submit their report to the rank and file, nor will the majority of the trade union executives present at the conference themselves submit that report or a record of how they themselves voted to the rank and file of their own unions. The working class will not be misled by this vote of endorsement, because it in no way represents the feelings of the workers upon the General Strike and the leadership of the General Council.

What are the political implications of the result of this conference ? They are of the most serious character, because it is the deliberate intention of the strongest part of the leadership of the General Council—that led by Mr. Thomas—that the decision of the conference should, if possible, put paid once and for all to the policy of the General Strike as a weapon of working-class struggle. That is the real significance of the decision of the January conference so far as the existing leadership is concerned.

But this goes further. The repudiation of the weapon of the General Strike is intended to lead to the rejection of sympathetic strike action, and from this it is but an easy stage to the position where the strike weapon will be discarded altogether, if the existing leadership have their way, in order that their policy of industrial

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peace and a five years' truce with the capitalists may be operated. This is the policy the present leadership intends to pursue.

In opposition to this, the policy of the National Minority Movement, directing and organising the activities of the revolutionary workers inside the trade unions, is quite clear. It is to declare unhesitatingly that the General Strike, given a new leadership, is still the most powerful weapon in the workers' armoury. The plain facts of the class struggle make future General Strikes inevitable. Our task is to commence to fight now for the complete reorganisation of the whole trade union movement, as regards policy, structure, and leadership.

The special conference, however, did not consider it its duty to spend ten minutes in discussing what line the movement has to take in view of the experiences of the General Strike, and the immense struggles immediately ahead. This failure of the official element throws added responsibility on every active and honest worker. They must range themselves with the Minority Movement, and by organised activity, on the basis of a common policy, by work inside the existing organisations from the workshop upwards, conduct such a campaign amongst the workers that the Trades Union Congress in September will be compelled to give attention to the following proposals, as being the best way out of the present terrible position that the trade union movement is in :—

(1) Concentration of power in the hands of a new General Council with a fighting leadership.

(2) Reorganisation of the method of electing such a Council, and the complete reorganisation of the method of conducting the business of the Trades Union Congress.

(3) The best ways and means of giving effect to the Scarborough resolution on the formation of factory committees.

(4) The immediate amalgamation of unions in kindred industries, and a general plan for the adoption of the policy of one union for each industry as the basis of our future industrial organisation.

(5) The development of the local trades councils, so that not only shall they be local centres of the workers' struggle, but also have a definite place in the organisation of the national

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trade union movement, with representation at the Trades Union Congress and on the General Council.

(6) The creation of a Trade Union and Co-operative Alliance.

(7) Closer co-operation with the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement, and definite activity on behalf of the unemployed.

(8) The organisation of Workers' Defence Corps.

(9) The achievement of international trade union unity.

(10) The whole question of trade union strategy in relation to—

- (a) Wage campaigns, defensive and offensive.
- (b) Joint action, methods and responsibilities.
- (c) Relation to Government and State.
- (d) The trade unions and the rôle of the Labour Party.
- (e) Future issues facing the working class.

In spite of the official sabotage, and the threats of expulsion as indicated by Thomas in his speech at Newport on the same night that the General Council got the endorsement of their official trade union bureaucrats, the Minority Movement will go forward popularising the above programme amongst the widest circle of the masses.

In case any reader should think that we are not giving a fair picture of the attitude of the trade union officials present at the special conference, it is only necessary to mention that when an old fighter like Alex. Gossip attempted to put a reasoned case against the General Council, he was deliberately interrupted; and when Comrade Purcell, of Barrow, tried to raise the urgent question of China, he was howled down by a gang of officials who were more concerned to get the conference over by twelve o'clock (to be able to get a drink) than they were to give serious attention to the issues calling for consideration. But another twelve months' campaigning will make such an impression on the movement that these types will be forced to retire from their positions of responsibility for the safeguarding of capitalism, and give way to the new leadership that will organise the defeat of capitalism and the victory of the workers.

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ITALIAN IMPERIALISM

By L. W.

THE pressure of Italy to secure colonial outlets has been the primary factor in her history during the past year. Her practical statesmen and her theoreticians alike realise the need for development. A well-known Italian journalist, in the Fascist Press last March, wrote :—

> It is important that foreigners should realise exactly what we mean when we speak of an Italian empire ; we mean an empire of colonies, outside Europe, beyond the seas.

The Fascist Government represents a combination of banking and industrial interests (with landlords as a poor third), and both of these classes must secure colonial expansion in order to maintain the profits of their economic operations. The industrialists require a steady source of raw materials, well under their control, and an assured market for their manufactured articles, while the iron and steel masters see in a spirited military policy the best prospect of sales of heavy munitions of war. The financiers equally desire further fields for their investments as the home market becomes increasingly inadequate.

The existing Italian colonies are small and few. Tripolitania has six million inhabitants, of little economic importance, and subject to incessant military outbreaks on the part of the natives. Eritrea, on the Red Sea, and Somaliland are more valuable, but the whole colonial area is insignificant by contrast with the vast possessions of Great Britain, France, or pre-war Germany.

In this disproportion, and in the contrast between the territorial gains of France and England after the war and the petty concessions made to Italy, is found the constant Fascist newspaper argument for imperial extensions.

In the spring of 1926 Mussolini was sent on a triumphal tour round Tripolitania, where he exercised every art to secure the friendship of Arab chieftains.

Simultaneously arrangements were being made with England to share out the spoils of Abyssinia. Engagements were entered into giving Italy power to link her East African colonies (Eritrea and Somaliland) by a railway through Abyssinia. Italy further

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was to have "exclusive economic influence in the west" of that country.

Another area in which feeling has run high on account of the expansionist policy of Fascism is Tunis. In this French possession the Italian population outnumbers the French by five to two, and there is always a good deal of angry talk proceeding on the treatment of the Italians by the French administration.

The only direction in which an expansion of territory is conceivable for Italy without a bloody and hopeless war with a major Power is in Asia Minor. Italy already wields a good deal of commercial influence in Anatolia, and, but for the resurrection of the Turkish power, under Kemal Pasha, this would have reached even more considerable proportions. Constant rumours are heard that the Fascist Government propose to take some immediate step or other to secure additional territory; and if these have any basis in fact, then Asia Minor is the most probable objective.

It is in the light of these territorial ambitions that the foreign policy of Italy is to be explained.

That policy has been directed to two ends: first, to securing an understanding with one or more of the Great Powers of Europe; and, secondly, to penetrating the Balkans in order to secure political support and economic outlets.

Albania is the natural base for any general move to obtain control of the Balkan countries, and Italian penetration has already reached an advanced stage there. Albania is of great strategical importance to Italy in that it controls the entrance to the Adriatic; moreover, it provides a military base for operations on the east of the Adriatic; and, thirdly, it has economic potentialities of which Italian capitalists are well aware. Albania would be invaluable as the granary of Italy (which does not provide enough corn for the use of her population), and as an outlet for the surplus population of Italy. Italian penetration has proceeded, under the friendly eyes of the Albanian landowners, ever since the war, and has reached its culmination in the loan recently granted and the Italo-Albanian agreement, the terms of which constitute in effect an Italian protectorate over the Balkan country.

Rumania, too, has been brought well under Italian influence

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by means of a loan. The conditions prescribe that part of the loan must be spent on submarines to be purchased from Italian shipyards, while the bulk of the remainder is to be invested in mineral companies, which will thus come under the control of Italian capitalists.

Relations with the Great Powers

The orientation of Italy in the European Powers is naturally determined by her colonial ambitions, the nature of which are such as to set up a profound hostility to France. Italian expansion is directed in many cases towards areas at present dominated by France—Tunis, Asia Minor, Syria, and even Corsica and Savoy. The anti-French feeling thus induced is fostered by Great Britain, whose interests are served by such hostility among her rivals for Mediterranean hegemony.

The policy of hostility to France has been carried to extreme lengths during 1926. In the main it was a genuine hostility based on the cleavage of economic interests outlined above, and one aspect of it was the newborn friendship with Germany. But in no small measure it has been created artificially in order to foster chauvinist enthusiasm among the population of Italy so as to distract their attention from domestic evils.

The Italo-Spanish Treaty, concluded in August, gives Italy support in her Mediterranean schemes, and is a further weapon directed against France.

The Italo-German Treaty, signed at Rome on December 29, marked the formal culmination of the tendency for these two Powers to unite forces. Both are seeking the same objectives—territory for colonial development and sources of raw materials.

It is premature at the time of writing to form a final judgment as to the real significance of this move, and it will be possible to understand it only when the results of the Stresemann-Mussolini conversation are known. It is perfectly possible that the German diplomats are using this flirtation with Italy primarily as a means to securing better terms for themselves in the negotiations with France; at any rate, this is no doubt an important factor in their minds. Whether it is the dominant consideration, or whether they feel that economic and political union with Italy is the best

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remedy for the losses suffered by Germany after the war, only the future will reveal. The relatively friendly reception of the treaty accorded by the French Press suggests that France does not stand to lose seriously by the deal.

Internal Affairs

The two alleged attempts on Mussolini's life in the summer of 1926, and the famous affair at Bologna during the celebrations of the fourth anniversary of the Fascist Revolution, led to a condition of hysteria in Government circles and to the passing of panic legislation.

There was, indeed, cause for anxiety. The internal economic situation was so serious that only the diversion caused by a violent foreign policy could succeed in blinding men's eyes to the facts. It is widely believed that the attempted assassinations—at any rate, that at Bologna—were publicity stunts arranged by the Fascist secret service and worked up by the Press with a view to distracting attention from the failure of the Fascist Government, and to furnishing excuses for further repression.

This followed without delay.

There came first a hideous wave of terror, unequalled even in modern Italy. Clubbings, kidnappings, burnings, pillage, and murder were carried out against all suspected of anti-Fascist leanings on a scale and to a degree of brutality that surpasses all credibility.

Then followed the famous Defence of the State Law. Under this law every form of political criticism of the Government is made an offence, punishable in the heaviest manner; the persons of the King and of the Principal Officer of State (*i.e.*, Mussolini) are protected by a special provision making plots against them punishable by death; and the same penalty is prescribed for attempts against the "independence and unity of the State." Such a term can clearly be interpreted to include any form of political activity which is unacceptable to the Government.

To administer these loosely defined laws special courts have been established on the lines of courts-martial. No juries sit with these courts, which consist exclusively of officers of the armed forces of the Crown or of the Fascist Militia.

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The domestic history of Italy since last May has been marked by a continuous decline in the effective control of affairs on the part of the Fascists, by a constant worsening of economic conditions, by the increasing disunity in the ranks of the Fascist Party itself.

Superficially there appears to have been a strengthening of the Fascist grip. Both legally and by extra-legal violence the suppression of all opposition has been carried to lengths previously undreamt of. No parliamentary opposition exists; the anti-Fascist Press is silenced; opposition leaders have been murdered, imprisoned, or exiled; the trade unions have been reduced to complete impotence.

But in fact these stages in the repression of the Italian masses indicate not the strength of Fascism, but its weakness; they show the necessity for ever-increasing pressure to keep the workers in subjection, and they mark the decline in the Fascist control over men's minds.

Fascism is the organ of finance-capital and landlordism; its instrument is the middle and lower-middle classes; its objective is the subjection of the workers. The significant phenomenon which 1926 has witnessed is the final emancipation of the lower-middle classes from Fascist ideology. No longer are the small shopkeepers, the clerks, and similar social strata prepared to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the wealthy bankers and industrialists and landowners.

The consequences have been numerous and significant. In the first place, Mussolini has found it necessary to reorganise his militia, to intensify the discipline, and to bring this weapon under his personal control.

Secondly, the Fascist Party has been reconstructed so as to place all power in the hands of a few self-elected leaders. The rank and file of the party can no longer be relied upon to support capitalist interests and the extreme measures which these necessitate; they are accordingly excluded from all share in shaping the policy and administration of the party.

One serious attempt to placate the lower elements in the party was made when the extremist Farinacci (whose die-hard antics were by no means acceptable to the peace-loving middle classes)

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was replaced as general secretary of the party by the moderate Turati. But this did not suffice.

Another effort to rally the support of the middle classes is seen in the militaristic policy in foreign affairs: Mussolini, seeing the defection of his supporters under the influence of economic realities, hopes to win them back on a wave of nationalist emotion.

Of the three elements in the ruling class in Italy—financiers, industrialists, and landlords—the first is now predominant in control of the Fascist Party and the Italian State.

This fact is demonstrated by the policy of deflation, which improves the stability of moneylenders and restricts the business of industrialists. In following this policy (with its inevitable consequence of unemployment and increased poverty) Mussolini has definitely yielded to the pressure of the bankers, who, in turn, are largely controlled by the financiers of New York and London. Foreign investors desire the stabilisation of the lira, in terms of which their investments have been made; but they want the stabilisation to proceed with caution, so as not to ruin the productivity and profit-earning capacity of the country in the process.

The exchange value of the lira has indeed been raised, and the demands of the investors thus met. The price has been paid by the working class. The number of unemployed and partly employed workers has risen to considerable heights, while bankruptcies are very numerous. The foreign trade balance is adverse, and exports are still falling. The poor harvest of 1926 has led to a further increase in wheat imports.

It is difficult to secure up-to-date figures of wages and cost of living, but the following tables, prepared by Professor Mortara and published in the *Manchester Guardian* of July 27, 1926, show the terrible plight to which Fascism has reduced the mass of the population:—

	Cost of living	Wages
1913-1914	100	100
First half of 1921	560	540
„ „ 1922	503	515
„ „ 1923	495	480
„ „ 1924	517	475
„ „ 1925	594	513
December 1, 1925	649	580

During 1926 the level of prices rose constantly and rapidly.

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At the same time the destruction of the Italian Trade Union Movement has enabled employers to impose worse conditions in every respect, a task in which they have been aided by the Government. The law to increase the working day by one hour has been brought into universal operation. Even the tame Fascist trade unions were driven by working-class pressure to revolt against this iniquitous burden, and several strikes took place, only to be suppressed in blood and fire.

The spirit of the Italian workers is still not broken, and sporadic outbreaks in protest against Fascism still occur. The agricultural workers of Molinella put up a magnificent fight against worsened conditions, and were rewarded with a dose of Fascist repression of unparalleled brutality.

The Molinella affair is of great importance because of its reaction to the Italian working class as a whole. The General Confederation of Labour (Confederazione Generale del Lavoro) still exists, though its leadership is feeble and its policy supine. The terrific repression at Molinella forced the Confederation to take some action, and a collection in aid of the terrorised workers was set up under the joint auspices of a number of Labour organisations. It was rapidly intimated to the reformist leaders that this course was not approved by the Fascists, and the matter was promptly dropped by all sections except the Italian Communist Party.

In the conditions of to-day the Communist Party is the only one which can function at all. In spite of bitter persecution, the beating, imprisonment, murder, or exile of its members, the party continues its work of explaining to the workers in the factories the class character of Fascism and of rallying them on every issue where a fight is possible. It has succeeded in establishing workers' committees in all the industrial centres of the country, and these bodies are taking the lead in infusing a new spirit into working-class resistance to Fascism. Neither the old unions nor the General Confederation are being superseded, but the active elements are using their efforts to re-galvanise the former in order that they may become fitted to lead the workers in the fight against Fascism.

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THE NEW BRITISH DELUSION

An American View

[*At the present time the propaganda of American conditions and methods as a model for this country is in full swing. How this propaganda is viewed in America is strikingly illustrated in this article from the American liberal progressive weekly, "The New Republic," which we reproduce with acknowledgments as of interest to English readers.*—ED., LABOUR MONTHLY.]

A RECENT article by Philip Kerr in the London *Nation* formulates more precisely than we have seen it formulated elsewhere a theory of American prosperity which is rapidly becoming accepted in England and is not without its counterpart in this country. This theory seems to be the outcome of a number of unofficial visits which have been made recently by British observers to a few of our large employers and bankers, of a reading of the works of Henry Ford, and, more deeply, of the disposition of those in serious trouble to grasp at panaceas which seem easier than facing unpleasant facts. The theory is, in our opinion, a dangerous delusion—all the more dangerous in that it systematises certain well-known and universally admitted facts. Englishmen who entertain it will merely postpone the amelioration of British conditions.

Mr. Kerr answers his own question, "Can we learn from America?" by the assertion that Britain can prosper by imitating the attitudes of American capital and labour toward industry and toward each other. "The root of Great Britain's economic difficulties is not the conditions created by the War, for these are passing away, but the irreconcilable conflict of idealism and conviction between capital and labour about the fundamental principles upon which industry itself should be conducted. The foundation of the prosperity of the United States is not its natural resources, though these are of great importance, but the fact that there is almost complete agreement between capital and labour as to the basic economic principles which must be followed

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if the whole community is to enjoy full employment at a steadily rising standard of living."

This universal agreement consists in the acceptance of three principles, according to Mr. Kerr : first, that it is beneficial to adopt as rapidly as practical " every new scientific discovery, every new invention, every labour-saving device " ; second, on the part of employers and capitalists, that the highest wages possible should be paid " which are warranted by the skill of the individual workman," and that a steadily rising standard of living should be provided to the workers so that they can consume the increasing product of industry; and third, on the part of labour, that labour will benefit most if capital earns good profits, and hence should co-operate with the employer to secure the most efficient work by every man and machine.

There are two chief difficulties with this theory: first, that it is not an accurate picture of the industrial scene in the United States; second, that it would not, even if practised, be sufficient to restore prosperity to Great Britain or to maintain it in the United States without important additions.

Anyone who had the least acquaintance with the economic history of this country before the year 1923 would see at once that the theory does not fit the facts. Let us take, for instance, the one item of wages and standards of living. All the good statistical evidence goes to show that there was no improvement in the average real wages of American wage-earners in the twenty-three years between 1896 and 1919, and that during that period real wages were sometimes below the level of 1896. While the principle of wages referred to by Mr. Kerr was during this period occasionally set forth, in primitive forms, by labour, it was not accepted by employers or anyone else except possibly politicians who, in defending the protective tariff, talked of a mythical prosperity of the working man. There was, to be sure, a generally accepted belief that standards of living should rise, but it was a corollary of this belief that they should rise by the ascent of the individual in the economic and social scale. " Opportunity " was the watchword of American meliorism.

During the War, with the rapid rise of prices, the activity of industry and the shortage in the labour market, certain readjust-

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ments became at once necessary and possible. Two wage principles were urged by the more liberal-minded and practised perforce by others. One was that a drop in real wages should be prevented by increasing money wages as rapidly as the cost of living rose. This, of course, involved no improvement in standards of living and brought about for the most part only a tardy adjustment of wages to prices. The other principle was that those workers having the lower standards should be raised to a certain minimum —not much above the " minimum of subsistence." The hesitating and partial application of these moderate principles brought an outcry from employers and many others, which sought to put the blame for the rising cost of living on high wages.

When deflation began, there was a concerted and powerful movement on the part of employers and financiers to " deflate " wages as prices fell. The justice and necessity of thus denying to labour any advance in real wages was thought by the economically ruling classes to be self-evident. It was freely predicted that prosperity could not return as long as wages and prices were " out of line." Only a happy combination of circumstances, not any general intention on the part of employers, brought it about that in the depression period wages fell less than retail prices. One of the reasons for this result certainly was the determination of organised labour to resist wage reductions to the utmost, coupled with the determination of many employers to avoid unionisation or destroy unions already in their establishments. Where unions controlled, they were able to mitigate the wage reductions, where they did not control, the employers feared to reduce too drastically while preaching the advantage to labour of a non-union policy. It was during this deflation period that the greater part of the post-war increase of real wages occurred.

Further increases in the wage average came with the industrial revival of 1922 and 1923—a period in which stabilised prices accompanied a tightening labour market. The rise of the average in this period was chiefly a matter of the more highly skilled and unionised trades consolidating for themselves the same percentage gains over pre-war levels that had previously been won by the less skilled. Since 1923 there has been no marked increase in real wages.

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We believe this jump of wages to be a real factor in our present prosperity, but we do not believe it is likely to continue indefinitely.

Organised labour, Henry Ford and a few other liberal employers genuinely believe in the economy of high wages. Organised labour does not believe, however, that high wages come automatically with improved productivity or by universal goodwill of employers. Its bitter experience has taught it otherwise. It has accepted the principle that improved productivity, invention and the rest of the modern industrial technique make higher wages *possible*—though not inevitable. It has experimented with specific co-operative agreements between trade unions and employers. But it fears with good reason that the present era of apparent goodwill is but a lull in a never-ending struggle for the division of the proceeds of industry. Most of the spokesmen of the employers who now preach the economy of high wages are simply making a virtue of a necessity. In a period of generally good profits it is easy to be generous. Since relatively high wages exist, employers like to take the credit. The test will come either when labour becomes strong enough to demand another forward jump in real wages or when another industrial depression enables employers to call for reductions.

But if Mr. Kerr's genial observations were based on reality, should we not be protected against future trouble? Hardly, because the basic conditions under which productivity can be progressively increased, and wages along with it, do not universally or automatically come into being. It was easy for Henry Ford to practise his philosophy, for the automobile industry was capable of rapid expansion to fill a new want—a want which will some day become stabilised at least to the growth of population. Has Mr. Kerr carefully examined our shoe industry, our cotton and woollen industries, our coal industry? These all show signs of illness—of illness which cannot be cured merely by technical improvements in productive processes, of illness which persists regardless of the degree of organisation of labour and its philosophy. It merely happens that the sickness of such industries does not affect our body economic as much as similar ailments in Great Britain, because of our greater and more varied resources

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and the earlier stage which we occupy in their exploitation. We are rich enough and young enough to be able to ignore such things for a while; Great Britain is so no longer.

The industrial history of both nations reveals, in the long view, a rapid and careless exploitation of natural resources by the new techniques based on the physical sciences. In the earlier period of such exploitation enterprise runs wild, and perhaps can be allowed to do so without much permanent damage. In the later stages a strategy in the direction of industry for the benefit of the whole community must be devised. In case this strategy can be applied soon enough serious disaster may be avoided. The danger is that industry will become top-heavy with insoluble problems before its development is adequately controlled. We are not certain but that this is the case in England, and that it is too late for any measures except such heroic ones that they might kill the patient. We heartily approve of good industrial management, increase of productivity, high wages. But does any informed person seriously believe, for instance, that these specifics could have been successfully applied to the British coal industry without a fundamental reorganisation of ownership and control? It is just because coal management is not and cannot be efficient under present circumstances that labour feels the necessity for a revolutionary change. Hence the "class conflict" which Mr. Kerr deplores. In saying that the Socialistic philosophy of British labour is largely responsible for the plight of British industry Mr. Kerr is putting the cart before the horse. Unless American labour can over a period of years gain such influence in the control of American industry, and such wisdom in controlling it that our industrial managements are able to avoid the pits of private enterprise, our labour is likely to become equally revolutionary. Certainly the danger cannot be avoided by refusing to take seriously such projects for national efficiency as the British Labour Party has espoused.

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JOSEPH DIETZGEN

By N. LENIN

[*This article, which is here translated from the Russian for the first time, was written for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Dietzgen, and was published in "Pravda," No.* 102 (306), *on May* 5, 1913.]

IT is twenty-five years since the death, in 1888, of the leather-worker Joseph Dietzgen, one of the most outstanding social democratic philosopher-writers of Germany. Joseph Dietzgen wrote the following among other works: *The Nature of Human Brain Work* (first published in 1869), *The Excursion of the Socialist in the Domain of the Theory of Knowledge*, and *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*. The most correct valuation of Dietzgen and his place in the history of philosophy and the working-class movement has been given already by Marx, in a letter to Kugelmann on December 5, 1868 :—

"Already long ago," wrote Marx, "Dietzgen sent me an extract from his manuscript *The Faculties of Thinking*, which, in spite of some confusion in conceptions and the too frequent repetitions, contains in itself many excellent thoughts, surprising for a worker to have reached by his independent thinking."

The significance of Dietzgen is the independent attainment by a worker to dialectical materialism, *i.e.*, to the philosophy of Marx. A very valuable sidelight on the characteristics of the worker Dietzgen is that he did not claim to be the founder of the school.

Joseph Dietzgen spoke of Marx as the head of the school already in 1873, when only a few understood Marx. Dietzgen emphasised that Marx and Engels "had their own philosophical school." And in 1886, long after the appearance of Engel's *Anti-Dühring*, one of the principal philosophical works of Marxism, Dietzgen wrote about Marx and Engels as "the recognised founders" of the school.

This is necessary to bear in mind, in order to estimate all kinds of followers of bourgeois philosophy, *i.e.*, idealism and agnosticism (including also Machism), who attempt to seize on this "some confusion" of Dietzgen. Dietzgen would himself have ridiculed and driven away such admirers.

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In order to reach understanding, workers must read Dietzgen ; but they must not forget for a minute that he is not always giving the right interpretation of the teaching of Marx and Engels, from whom alone one can learn philosophy.

Dietzgen wrote in an epoch of shallow and insipid materialism. Therefore Dietzgen laid special stress upon the historical transformations of materialism, on the *dialectical* character of materialism, that is, on the necessity to view things from the standpoint of development, to understand the relativity of all human knowledge, to understand the manifold relations and inter-relations of all phenomena of the world and to carry physical evolutionary materialism forward to the materialist conception of history.

Basing himself on the relativity of human knowledge, Dietzgen often falls into confusion by giving incorrect concessions to idealism and agnosticism. Idealism in philosophy is more or less a crafty defence of clericalism, a doctrine which puts faith higher than science, or on a level with science, or which in general allots a place to faith. Agnosticism (from the Greek *a*—negative—and *gnosis*—knowledge) is a vacillation between materialism and idealism, *i.e.*, in practice vacillation between materialist science and clericalism. To the agnostics belong the followers of Kant (Kantians), of Hume (the positivists, realists and others) and present-day " Machists." Therefore, some of the most reactionary bourgeois philosophers, notorious princes of darkness and defenders of clericalism, have tried to exploit the mistakes of Dietzgen.

But in general, and as a whole, Dietzgen is a materialist. Dietzgen is an enemy of clericalism and agnosticism. " With the previous materialists," wrote Dietzgen, " we have only this in common: that we recognise matter as antecedent or as a primary notion." The " only " is the essence of philosophical materialism.

" The essence of the materialist theory of knowledge," wrote Dietzgen, " is the recognition that the human organ of knowledge is not itself a source of any metaphysical light, but that it is a piece of nature reflecting other pieces of nature." This is the materialist theory of the *reflection* in man's consciousness of the ever-moving and changing matter, that is, the theory which evokes hatred and terror, calumny and distortion, from all official professorial philosophy. And with what a deep passion of a true revolutionary

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did he whip and brand the "certificated lackeys of clericalism," professors, idealists, realists, &c.! "Of all parties"—Dietzgen wrote rightly of philosophical "parties," *i.e.*, of materialism and idealism—"the most vile is the party of the centre."

To this "vile party" belong the editorial board of *Luch* and Mr. S. Semkovsky (*Luch*, No. 92). The editorial board in this issue printed an article of Mr. Semkovsky on Dietzgen with the following note of reservation: "We do not share the general philosophical point of view," but the exposition of Dietzgen is "correct and clear."

This is a glaring untruth. Mr. Semkovsky shamelessly mutilated and distorted Dietzgen by using just his "confusion" and completely suppressed Marx's valuation of Dietzgen. Meanwhile even Plechanoff, the most widely versed Socialist in the philosophy of Marxism, and the best Marxists in Europe have completely recognised this valuation.

Mr. Semkovsky distorts both philosophical materialism and Dietzgen. He speaks nonsense both on the question of "one or two worlds" (as if this were the "fundamental question"! Really you should study a little, dear sir, and read at least Engels' *Feuerbach*) and on the question of the world and phenomena (Dietzgen is said to have reduced the real world only to phenomena, this is a clerical and professorial calumny of Dietzgen).

It is impossible to recount all the distortions of Mr. Semkovsky. Let the workers, who are interested in Marxism, know that the editorial board of *Luch* is an alliance of liquidators of Marxism. Some liquidate the illegality, *i.e.*, the party of the proletariat (Mayevsky, Sedoff, F. D., &c.), others the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat (Potressoff, Koltsoff and others), others the philosophical materialism of Marx (Mr. Semkovsky and Co.), others again the internationalism of proletarian Socialism (members of the Bund, Kossovsky, Medem and others—supporters of the so-called "cultural national autonomy"), others the economic theory of Marx (Mr. Maslov with his theory of rent and a "new sociology"), &c., &c.

The glaring distortion of Marxism by Mr. Semkovsky and Co. is only one activity of this literary "League of Liquidators."

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CROW'S NEST PASS

By SCOTT NEARING

MANY a British miner has left the Old Country during the past six years and made his way into the coal-fields of Canada. The stories of wealth and prosperity in the New World were alluring. The mines were slack at home, so they made the break by thousands and settled in the Canadian fields.

Crow's Nest Pass is one of the Canadian coal-fields—located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, almost down to the United States boundary line. The pass is a long, narrow valley that runs from east to west, winding among the great hills that tower three or four thousand feet above the valley bottom.

Part of the hill-slopes are forested. Elsewhere they consist of bare rock, sheer and stark.

Folded under these hills there are coal veins from nine to twenty feet in thickness. At the bottom of the folds the veins lie horizontal, but on the sides of the folds they are often inclined at an angle of from 32 to 45 degrees.

Coal mines are scattered at intervals of two or three miles along the valley. Some of the older mines have already been worked out and abandoned. Others are down as much as six thousand feet. The mines have been in operation only about thirty years, but with the vast coal deposits in Alberta it does not pay to work them too carefully.

About six thousand miners are at work in the valley—that is, they are at work when they are wanted, which, at the moment, is about twice a week. There has been a slacking off in the demand for Crow's Nest coal. The Canadian Pacific is the chief customer, but the railroad does only a small business in this sparsely settled province, and the capacity of the mines is far in excess of the Canadian Pacific needs. So the miners wonder and hope.

The change to water-power is having its effect. Even the mines themselves are installing hydro-electric equipment. The movement was begun in 1923, and it is gaining headway. Free water is cheaper than even home-made coal.

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In the "old days" (before 1919) when the unions were strong, there was a minimum wage, and the hours and working conditions were among the most favourable to be met with anywhere in North America, but there was a long strike in that year; the unions lost out, and they have been losing ever since.

A minimum wage rate is still in existence, but the employers pay it only when they feel that the contract miners have "earned" it. In some of the workings, where the digging is hard, it is difficult to make the minimum.

Since the strike of 1919 the miners in the Crow's Nest have suffered one wage cut after another. During recent years there have been two cuts. One followed the 1924 strike. The other caused a lock-out in 1925. The two cuts totalled between 40 and 45 per cent.

Until 1919 the miners were organised under the United Mine Workers of America. In that year, however, many of them joined the One Big Union. At the present time there are five separate unions contending for the support of the workers. No one of the organisations is really strong, and in the east end of the Pass, in the five leading mines, the companies have succeeded in making a separate agreement for each mine. These agreements are not made with the union, but with the "employees" of that particular company.

These local unions are not "company unions" in the strict sense of the word, but one of the agreements, which I have before me, reads: "Contract entered into between the West Canadian Collieries, Ltd., and the employees of Greenhill Mine (or their association)." The first clause, headed "Management of Mine," is as follows: "The right to hire and discharge, the management of the mine and the direction of the working forces are vested exclusively in the company, and the employees (or their association) shall not abridge this right." The contract runs for three years from April 7, 1925.

Wage rates are fixed under the contract, but the minimum wages are being paid to contract miners only in case the company is satisfied that the men have done "a fair day's work." The workers have no means of enforcing the contract when it is broken, as their union is a strictly local one, officered entirely by local men.

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Last year a Commission appointed by the Provincial Government made a study of the cost of living in the Pass, and came to the conclusion that it required $1,800 to provide a minimum living for a man, wife, and three children. During that same year the average earnings of the men were about $900. Recently there have been a number of cases where miners have been forced to move because of their inability to get enough work to support their families. Investigations of these cases indicate that the families of these miners were from $400 to $1,100 in debt—to the landlord, the storekeepers, &c.

Men are all well known through the Pass. The black list is in full bloom. The moment a man gets a reputation as an agitator he is doomed as far as making a living in the mines is concerned, and there are no other industries in the neighbourhood that provide work that the miners are able to do.

"Are there members of the Communist Party of Canada in the Pass?" I asked again and again.

The answers were always the same: "Not if they get caught at it!" "Not a man who knows when he is well off!" "Find them if you can!" "Yes, in clink with Kid Burns!" The answers came bitterly as a rule, but the men have no alternative and no defence. They are wholly at the mercy of the mineowners.

Working conditions are bad in many cases. The coal is full of gas. In some workings this gas accumulates so rapidly that the workings become dangerous within a very short time. There have been two explosions in the Hillcrest Mine. One occurred in June, 1914. There were 235 men in the mine at the time; 189 were killed, and of these 187 were buried in a special cemetery opened for the purpose. This graveyard stands on the hill just below the mine as a grim reminder.

The second explosion came on September 19, 1926. By lucky chance it occurred at ten o'clock in the evening, just before the night-shift went down. There were two men in the mine at the time. One of them was smothered by gas; the other had his head blown off.

The force of this latter explosion was so terrific that it crushed in the cement wall of a hoisting room which stood about 100 feet from the entrance to the mine.

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There are few Labour papers taken in the Pass. No Labour education is being carried on by the unions. The children grow up anyway—spending their time out of school roaming through the town or over the hills. Several of the churches are trying to do something toward the organisation of the boys. Apparently nothing is being done for the girls. When they reach the age of sixteen or seventeen, they drift off into some other part of the country looking for work. The girls go into restaurants and factories. The boys try for anything outside of the mines.

A sullen, helpless, resentful, inert mass of workers being slowly worn down and crushed by the " system "—that is the net impression of Crow's Nest Pass.

Perhaps the nature of the forces at work is best symbolised by the story of what happened on the night of April 19, 1903.

In the eastern end of the Pass stands the Turtle, four thousand feet of towering grey rocks. When the mines were first opened, one mine was located near this mountain, and the mine camp nestled against its base. The peak of the mountain was divided into two by a great cleft, where a sulphur dyke had been weathered away. The frosts were coming out of the ground in April, 1903, and at three o'clock on the morning of the 19th, without a sound of warning, the section of the Turtle that overhung the little mining camp of Frank broke from the mountain, slipping and crashing, burying camp, road and railroad and throwing a spray of huge rocks a mile and a quarter across the valley. That pile of rocks still lies where it fell. When the new road was run through, the workmen found some bones, which were duly buried in a respectable cemetery. As for the mining camp, with its 190 workers, and a lumber camp which had just been set up below it, they are still buried under the thousands of tons of debris that blanket the valley.

The miners are not vanquished. Far from it. Sooner or later they will stage a come-back. The unions will be reorganised and reaffiliated. The lost wages and working conditions will be regained. In the meantime, however, they lie crushed under an economic system that cannot pay them a living because there is too much coal (and too much of the other necessaries of life) being produced by means of the modern machine industry.

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The World of Labour

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF UNEMPLOYED IN GERMANY

THE First National Congress of Unemployed Workers in Germany opened in Berlin on December 1. The delegates numbered 429, of whom 299 were organised in the General Federation of Trade Unions, 107 were not industrially organised and the rest were members of the Christian and independent Trade Unions. Each delegate represented from 1,000 to 3,000 workers.

The opening address reviewed the general position of unemployment in the principal countries, and dealt in particular with unemployment in Germany. Of the post-war industrial crises in Germany the present had given rise to most unemployment, and the development of the process of rationalisation intensified the problem of unemployment and the poverty of the working class.

In spite of its promise to "create work" the rationalisation of German industry had resulted in longer hours for those employed and an increase in the number of workless. At the present time the number of those actually unemployed was well over two millions, and added to this more than a million workers were on short time to such an extent that they might be considered as unemployed.

The immediate demands of the unemployed must, therefore, include the establishment of the eight-hour day and the forty-two-hour week. Such demands necessitated a united front and a common fight of workers, both employed and unemployed, and a resolution to this effect was carried unanimously.

Speaker after speaker emphasised the fact that the demands of the unemployed could not be attained without a united struggle of all working-class organisations, and the following resolution was passed by the Congress :—

> In recognition of the necessity for Trade Union organisation, the Congress demands of the General Federation of Trade Unions that its affiliated Trade Unions accept for membership unorganised unemployed workers paying an entrance fee of 10 pfennings and weekly contributions of the same amount.

The Social Democratic fraction, numbering thirty-three, issued a statement condemning the class-collaboration policy of their leaders in the National and State parliaments, and appealing to all Social Democrats in the country to agitate for the return to a fighting working-class policy.

The following day, *Vorwärts*, the organ of the Social Democratic Party, contained an article characterising the Unemployed Congress as a "Communist Theatre," and accusing the Communists of using the unemployed as "political capital" and mocking at their misery.

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The same day the Social Democratic fraction issued an indignant protest against this statement, pointing out that the Congress was the expression and outbreak of the misery of the unemployed, of whatever party, and an effort in the struggle to satisfy their demands, "which, in our opinion, have not been energetically enough fought for by our parliamentary representatives of the Social Democratic Party."

Greetings were sent to the functionaries of the Congress of Workers, to take place in Berlin a few days later, and, as the result of a deputation being sent, the delegates to the Unemployed Congress were enrolled as delegates to the Workers' Congress with a deliberative voice.

Delegations from the Congress to the General Federation of Trade Unions and to the Minister of Labour received neither satisfaction nor recognition, but in spite of this the Congress concluded with an appeal for a united front and a common fight of employed and unemployed workers.

THE REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS' MOVEMENT IN JAPAN

DURING the last five or six years, largely under the influence of Marxian and Leninist thought, a strong revolutionary movement has grown up among Japanese students.

In 1920 May Day Demonstrations were organised for the first time, and shortly afterwards the Federation of Japanese Students was formed, supported mostly by students—but this organisation was suppressed by the Government. The next year a Communist Group was formed in the Waseda University, in Tokio. This also was suppressed, but the movement in the university continued to develop, and in 1923 there occurred the famous trial of the Communist Professor of Economics at Waseda, Manabu Sano. The movement had already spread to the other colleges, and on November 7, 1922, the Students' Federation was started. By 1924, when the name of the organisation had been changed to the Japanese Students' Federation of Social Science, they had over fifty branches in the colleges and a membership of over 2,000. The Students' Federation is Communist in outlook and aims at spreading a knowledge of Marxian theory and economics among the young workers and university students.

The student organisations have met with constant persecution on the part of the Government, and in the spring of 1926 the arrest of forty-two students in the universities of Tokio and Kyoto aroused great excitement in Japan.

The growth of the revolutionary students' movement has helped to strengthen the Left Wing trade unions, which are increasing their membership more rapidly than the Conservative unions. In 1925 the membership of the National Council of Trade Unions (the organisation of the Left Wing unions) had a membership of 18,700, which increased to 38,000 in 1926. The General Confederation of Labour, on the other hand, has increased from 23,000 in 1925 to 43,000 in 1926. The Peasants' Union, which is the most important of the Left Wing unions, has developed more rapidly than any other union, and now has 961 branches and a membership of 73,000.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIAN ANALYSIS

Selected Essays. By Karl Marx. (Translated by H. J. Stenning.) Published by Leonard Parsons, London.

THE book contains seven essays, written by Karl Marx between the years 1843 and 1850, the majority of them, however, in the years 1845-46. They deal with the following subjects: Hegelian Philosophy of Law, Jewish question, the State and Social Reform, Democracy and Communism, Proudhon, French Materialism, the English Revolution.

The essays exhibit Marx's advance from the standpoint of humanitarianism, on which he placed himself after leaving the university (1841), to that of socialism based on the materialist conception of history, which he reached in 1844-45, and to which he gave fairly complete expression in *Misery of Philosophy* (1847) and the *Communist Manifesto* (1848).

The earliest and least socialist essay is that on the *Jewish Question.* It was written in 1843 in the form of a review of a book dealing with Jewish emancipation or granting political rights to the Jews in Germany. Here we see Marx as a critical humanitarian, believing that man in the abstract is free from all religious and racial prejudices and economic selfishness and striving for social righteousness. The work of the philosopher and true statesman is to make society approach to the ideal man. The greatest obstacle in the way to the ideal is commercialism, or the economic system of selfishness which pervades present-day bourgeois society. Since, however, the Jewry is the embodiment of bourgeois commercialism, the whole question of Jewish emancipation resolves itself into the question of emancipating society from commercialism. In this essay we catch the first glimpse of Marx's progress from Radical politics to social economics. The problem of political rights for a section of the community is turned into the greatest economic problem of society.

The second essay in point of time and importance is that on *Hegelian Philosophy of Law* (1844). Marx writes already as a social revolutionary who attempts to get a clear notion of the classes which compose bourgeois society, and the part they play in it. Although the essay deals with Germany and with the meaning which Hegelian philosophy has for that country, it is applicable to society in general. We find in that essay, for the first time. the term proletariat and, moreover, the idea of the revolutionary rôle of the proletariat. Marx has got far beyond the humanitarian point of view which "declares man to be the supreme being of mankind." He attains to the conviction that as soon as the proletariat is inspired with the revolutionary philosophy, which is nothing else but the theoretic expression of its movements and struggles, it will bring about its own emancipation and at the same time the emancipation of the whole society from every kind of serfdom.

In the third essay, the *State and Social Reform* (1845), Marx is quite free from all deification of the State, which, one would have supposed, he might have adhered to as a follower of Hegel. The essay arose from a criticism of a Prussian Radical who asked for nothing less than that the State should abolish

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pauperism by means of more rational administration. Marx tells him plainly no State can do that, since it does not look for the cause of social evils in society, except either in the inferior morality of the poor or of the rich, that is, either in the laziness of the poor or in the greed of the rich. Even the Radical politicians see the cause of poverty not in the arrangements of society, but in a specific form of the State, which they aim at replacing by another form. Moreover, even the revolutionary who strives for a violent overthrow of the State is no better than they, since his act would not affect the arrangements of society. A political revolution is only important in so far as it is turned into an instrument for dissolving the old conditions of society. The political revolution or the overthrow of a form of government is but the necessary preliminary to the introduction of socialism. To ask a bourgeois government or an oligarchic State to abolish poverty is really to ask it to abolish itself and the old order of society into the bargain, which is an absurd demand.

The essay on democracy and communism, which is headed *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality* (1846), deals trenchantly with the difference between political democracy and economic communist thinking. This is one of the most important and topical essays in the book. It is a fine piece of polemical writing against the middle-class democrat and republican. Karl Heinzen, who severely reproaches the Communists with promoting reaction by fighting the Liberals and democrats, by emphasising the precedence of economics over politics, by expatiating on the economic transformation of society as against political democracy and republicanism. Heinzen argues that "the injustice in the property relations" is only maintained by regal or oligarchic force; hence, given democratic institutions, economic injustice will disappear. To these reasonings Marx replies that "the injustice in the present property relations" does not proceed from political force, but, on the contrary, the modern arrangements of production, division of labour, free competition, concentration, &c., are the sources of the present political arrangements; the political rule of the bourgeoisie proceeds from those relations of production which are proclaimed by bourgeois economists to be necessary and eternal laws. The existing bourgeois property relations are maintained by the agencies of State power, police and military, which the bourgeoisie has organised for the protection of its property relations. "The property question, according to the successive stages in the development of industry, has always been the vital question of a particular class. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the point at issue was the abolition of feudal property relations, the property question was the vital question of the middle class. In the nineteenth century, when the point at issue is the abolition of bourgeois property relations, the property question is a life question for the working class." The essay is a long one, containing a good deal of history and politics; it may be regarded as a forerunner of the "Communist Manifesto."

The remarks on *Proudhon* are taken from Marx-Engel's book against the German Liberal writers, the three brothers Bauer. The title of the book is *Holy Family* (1845). In the chapter on Proudhon we see the interpretation which Marx gives to Hegelian dialectics. Without some knowledge of this, the essay on Proudhon will be difficult reading. In the introduction to my booklet, *Karl Marx: his Life and Work*, I made an attempt at popularising it.

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Most of the sixth essay on *French Materialism* (1845) I translated some years ago for the LABOUR MONTHLY. It shows Marx as an historian of philosophy, and it can only be appreciated by students of philosophy.

The last essay on the *English Revolution* is a review of Guizot's pamphlet, *Pourquoi la revolution d'Angleterre a-t-elle reussi* (1850). Guizot was a French statesman of much experience and learning. As a young man he understood the rôle of the classes in the French Revolution, but later on he fell back on the political and even religious interpretations of history. Indeed, to the question, why the English Revolution was more successful than the French Revolution, Guizot gives the answer, first, the English Revolution bore a thoroughly religious character and therefore broke in no way with the traditions of the past; secondly, the English Revolution did not wear a destructive but a constructive aspect, Parliament defending the old laws against the encroachments of the Crown; thirdly, the victorious revolution concentrated its energies on stabilising the Parliamentary regime, and promoting trade.

Marx makes short work of Guizot's explanations. Guizot fails to see that the free thought of the French Revolution was imported to France from England. Locke, Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke were the masters of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot. With regard to the second point, Guizot forgets that at the outset the French Revolution was quite as conservative as the English; the third estate demanded the revival of the Estates General which had been extinct since Henry IV and Louis XIII. And as the third point, the concentration on Parliamentary government and the promotion of trade and commerce, was the inevitable consequence of the Revolution which arose not from a struggle between the Crown and the commercial class for political privileges, but from the Stuarts interfering with the free development of trade and commerce; the concentration on Parliamentary government meant nothing else than the subjection of the Crown to the interests of trade and commerce. For the rest, the essay must be read as it was written by Marx, who really explains the problem why the English Revolution was more homogeneous and suffered less from internecine struggles than the French Revolution. The English Revolution was borne by the continuous alliance of the middle class with the largest section of the great landowners, "an alliance that essentially distinguishes the English Revolution from the French Revolution, which destroyed large landed property by parcelling out the soil. The English class of large landowners, which had originated under Henry VIII, unlike the French feudal landowners, did not find itself in conflict, but rather in harmony, with the material conditions of life of the bourgeoisie. It placed at the disposal of the middle class the necessary population to carry on manufactures and it was able to develop agriculture to a degree which corresponded to the state of industry and commerce. Hence its common interests with the middle class, hence its alliance with the latter."

MAX BEER.

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